









yours very truly  
George Payne

LECTURES  
ON  
CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY.

BY THE LATE  
REV. GEORGE PAYNE, LL.D.  
PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY IN THE WESTERN COLLEGE.

WITH  
A MEMOIR BY REV. JOHN PYER,  
AND  
REMINISCENCES BY REV. RALPH WARDLAW, D.D.

EDITED BY  
EVAN DAVIES.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:  
JOHN SNOW, 35, PATERNOSTER ROW.

---

1850.

LONDON:  
PRINTED BY W. BLANCHARD & SONS,  
MILLBANK-STREET, WESTMINSTER.

## P R E F A C E .

---

SINCE the year 1763, the Church has not been furnished with the Theological Prelections of any Professor among the English Nonconformists. In that year—the twelfth after his lamented death—the first edition of Dr. Doddridge's Lectures was issued from the press. The literature of the Dissenting community in this country is, in this branch, surprisingly meagre. The present volumes, consisting of Lectures delivered by Dr. Payne to the Students of the Collegiate Institutions over which he presided, stand nearly alone in the literature of a whole century.

It is true that in Scotland the Lectures of Principal Hill, of Professors Dick and Balmer, with those of Dr. Chalmers, have been given to the world; nor should the Lectures of Dr. Dwight be passed by without a grateful reference; but none of them fill the place which the Works of Payne are designed and adapted to occupy. These Lectures, appearing in such circumstances, will meet, it is hoped, with a generous reception from the public, but especially from the Denomination of which our revered Author was so bright an ornament, and of whose distinctive principles he was so intelligent and firm an Advocate.

To praise, if not even to recommend, anything that proceeded from the pen of Dr. Payne, would amount to something like an act of impertinence on my part; for his productions need no

recommendation from our Masters, even, in Theological Science. He has been placed long since by all who have known his merits in the first rank of our Orthodox Divines. His name has long been its own, its best, recommendation. It may be permitted me, however, to observe that the characteristics of his former Works will be found to distinguish the volumes I have now the honour of introducing to the notice of the Christian Church, and of adding to the published stores of Sacred Theology.

Nevertheless, it cannot but be interesting to the reader to have placed before him the Doctor's own unassuming estimate of these Lectures. It refers not indeed to their matter, but principally to their arrangement. Still it will show the principle, in respect to the one as well as the other, that guided him in their composition—utility.

“Under what particular arrangement,” says Dr. Payne, addressing his class on entering the study of Systematic Divinity, “I should present to you those great truths, which are to form the subject of your future ministry, has cost me no slight degree of inquiry and thought. It should be comprehensive, so as to include everything at least of importance in the Christian system; and it should be such as to prevent, as much as possible, the necessity of either anticipation or repetition, and so admit of being concluded within reasonable bounds. To frame an arrangement of this kind is probably more difficult than any one is aware, till he comes to make the attempt. I felt not perhaps an unusual, not an unnatural repugnance to follow exactly in the beaten track. It is flattering to our pride, to be able to think we have made some improvement upon the plans of our forefathers. But on fullest consideration,—and recollecting that usefulness, and not originality, should be our object,—I am constrained to think that I cannot deviate materially from the usual order, without detriment to you. And while I remain in my right mind, I trust I shall never make your interest subordinate to anything but the paramount and absorbing consideration—the glory of that Being to whom all our homage, and all our love, and all our services

are perpetually due,—from which, however, your real advantage can never be disjoined.”

It ought, however, to be observed that the two volumes published by the Doctor himself\* were included in his Collegiate Course, and that the preceding statement has reference to the place and order of those as well as these, as originally delivered. The former, as published, are greatly modified by enlargement, sometimes compression; or some other change deemed necessary from the aspect of Theological opinions, or the character of Theological discussion, at the time they were prepared for the press. Still, that those volumes might not assume even a form merely ephemeral, the discussions, that seemed to be invested only with temporary importance or interest, are for the most part thrown into notes and appendices; but the subjects of these, like the text of the above, are topics that can never lose their importance or their interest, in the annals of time or the endless duration of eternity,—topics that may conveniently be summed up and embodied in one word, REDEMPTION. In these four volumes the reader is put in full possession of Dr. Payne’s views on all the great truths of the Christian system. They form together a body of Doctrinal Divinity.

In all he did, usefulness in the Redeemer’s service was the supreme desire of Dr. Payne. No one who knew him could, for a moment, deny—nor even doubt—this; and in all his labours, he kept his eye fixedly on it. His piety was such that it commanded his whole mind, soul, and works,—it pervaded everything he was and did; so that his aim was not originality, as he states, but usefulness and truth. If to secure the one, and to illustrate the other, originality came, unsought for,—and to what extent it came the following MEMOIR will unfold,—it was accepted, but only on the above conditions. And with this understanding, and

\* Lectures on Divine Sovereignty, Election, the Atonement, Justification and Regeneration; *Third Edition*.

The Doctrine of Original Sin, or the Native State and Character of Man unfolded; forming the *Eleventh Series of the Congregational Lecture*.

on such principles, ought Dr. Payne's literary works to be read and estimated. On such terms, indeed, his past labours have been received and hailed.

These observations may be appropriately concluded in the language of the Doctor himself, in his Preface to the volume on *DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY, &c.* "This work is not especially, far less exclusively, designed for those who sustain the sacred office." . . . Its "leading object has been to awaken a greater spirit of reading and research among the members of the Church at large, and to put into their hands a [work] which might tend, with the blessing of God, to promote generally a more correct and familiar acquaintance with the great principles on which it treats than perhaps at present prevails." Such is its adaptation.

One word more. The work of editing these volumes could not but prove a "labour of love" to a former attached pupil. How many grateful recollections it has called to mind! How greatly it has deepened the sense of obligations previously felt! And in the performance of such a duty, love could not fail of assuming the form of reverence! The occupation related to the dead! On the spot stood his monument, erected by his own hands,—it could have been erected by no other; and the Editor esteemed it no small honour to be employed in removing some of the scaffolding which no one was permitted to touch till the revered Builder had retired to his REST! The employment has been solemn but instructive! Here words should be few; and therefore he will only suggest to the reader, that when he comes hither—to the literary monument of his venerated Tutor—thought and reflection are needful and appropriate!

E. D.

RICHMOND,

February, 1850.

# CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

## MEMOIR.

	Page
INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS . . . . .	xvii.
PARENTAGE, CHILDHOOD, AND YOUTH . . . . .	xviii.
STUDENT AT HOXTON AND GLASGOW . . . . .	xxvi
MARRIAGE—ASSISTANT MINISTER AT LEEDS AND HULL . . . . .	xxxi
PASTOR AT EDINBURGH . . . . .	xlvi
PRESIDENT AND THEOLOGICAL TUTOR OF BLACKBURN ACADEMY . . . . .	lx
PRESIDENT AND THEOLOGICAL TUTOR OF THE WESTERN ACADEMY, AT EXETER . . . . .	lxvi
REMOVAL TO PLYMOUTH, DECLINING HEALTH, AND DEATH . . . . .	xcii
SUMMARY OF CHARACTER . . . . .	cvi
<hr/>	
ADDRESS AT THE INTERMENT . . . . .	cxxv
LIST OF DR. PAYNE'S PUBLICATIONS . . . . .	cxxx
<hr/>	
REMINISCENCES . . . . .	cxxxi

## LECTURES.

### FIRST SERIES.

#### DIVINE EXISTENCE AND PERFECTIONS.

#### INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.

Theology, meaning of:—sources of theological knowledge:—the division of Religion, into Natural and Revealed, improper:—admitting it, difficulties



attending such a division:—its inutility:—one probable advantage conceded:  
 —reasons for studying Theology in a systematic form:—objections answered:—  
 —it aids the acquisition of knowledge:—aids the communication of truth:  
 —places the entire testimony of Scripture on any given subject before the  
 mind . . . . . Page 3

## LECTURE II.

## EXISTENCE OF GOD.

This doctrine the foundation of all religion:—definition of:—the importance of the subject:—mistakes:—atheism:—the knowledge of God not traceable to the light of nature, but revelation:—*postulata*:—The argument of Dr. Bentley:—the conviction that there is a God, almost universal, forming the ground of the highest degree of probability in favour of this doctrine . 15

## LECTURE III.

## NATURAL PERFECTIONS OF GOD—SELF-EXISTENCE AND IMMUTABILITY.

Substance of former lecture stated:—classification of the Divine attributes:—self-existence and eternity of God, definition of:—taught by reason:—taught by Scripture:—immutability:—distinction between self-existence and immutability:—difference between the immutability of God and that ascribed to creatures:—objections to the immutability of God stated and answered:—  
 Lessons . . . . . 28

## LECTURE IV.

## NATURAL PERFECTIONS OF GOD—OMNIPRESENCE AND OMNISCIENCE.

Omnipresence, definition of:—the evidence of, as derived from reason and revelation:—omniscience:—objects of Divine knowledge:—things *existing*, and things that *might* exist:—the statements of Scripture:—Dr. Adam Clarke's view; and remarks on:—improvements . . . . . 45

## LECTURE V.

## NATURAL PERFECTIONS OF GOD—OMNIPOTENCE.

Preliminary remark:—terms explained and illustrated:—the sense in which potency is ascribed to God:—proof that he is almighty:—creation:—the support of creation:—an objection to the proof of omnipotence answered:—spiritual creation:—conclusion . . . . . 61

## LECTURE VI.

## MORAL PERFECTIONS OF GOD—RECTITUDE.

The importance of this class of perfections:—definition and illustrations:—rectitude—examination of terms:—the respects in which rectitude is to be ascribed to Jehovah:—proof of the doctrine—declarations of Scripture—the original state of all rational beings—the law—the judgments of God—redemption:—objections answered:—practical improvements . . . Page 77

## LECTURE VII.

## MORAL PERFECTIONS OF GOD—JUSTICE.

Definition of the doctrine:—the ways in which it may be violated in the functions of government:—God's government in accordance with justice:—what perfect justice requires in the law:—the connection of justice with punishment and rewards:—the full display of justice reserved for the great day, proofs of—Scripture—benevolence of God:—pardon of sin, a difficulty:—mistaken view of the atonement; its source . . . . . 96

## LECTURE VIII.

## MORAL PERFECTIONS OF GOD—VERACITY.

Veracity, or truth, and faithfulness, modifications of rectitude:—proofs of the Divine veracity, *first*, from the attributes of God:—*second*, from the constitution given to man:—*third*, from the Scriptures:—*fourth*, from the history of the Divine dispensations:—*fifth*, from the personal experience of the godly:—objections stated and answered:—lessons taught by this doctrine . . . 115

## LECTURE IX.

## MORAL PERFECTIONS OF GOD—DIVINE GOODNESS.

Definition and illustration of:—proof of; *first*, from the supremacy of the Divine nature:—*second* proof, from benevolent motives necessarily present to the mind of the Deity:—*third* proof, from the character and dictates of the human intellect:—*fourth* proof, the provision made for the happiness of the creature:—objections to the preceding reasoning met:—the bearing of the fact, that some animals prey on others, on the argument:—the statements of Paley and Watts . . . . . 131

## LECTURE X.

## MORAL PERFECTIONS OF GOD—DIVINE GOODNESS?—(Continued.)

Substance of preceding lecture recapitulated:—man, sinful, his pain and suffering no reflection therefore on the Divine goodness:—estimate of God's goodness enhanced by this:—*fifth* proof, the testimony of Scripture to the goodness of God:—*sixth* proof of Divine goodness, the nature and character of the law:—*seventh* proof, the atonement:—considerations—*depravity of man, the greatness of God's gift, the purpose of the gift, and the nature of the benefits conferred*—by which the Divine goodness is enhanced:—the grand objection to the Divine goodness, *the existence of moral evil*, considered:—the specific character and consequent result of this spiritual lapse considered . Page 147

## LECTURE XI.

## MORAL PERFECTIONS OF GOD—PATIENCE AND MERCY.

The scope of the terms, goodness, mercy, grace, and patience, reviewed:—patience:—proofs of, supplied, by the goodness of God, by the express declarations of Scripture, and by the conduct of God towards mankind:—the design of Divine patience:—mercy of God:—proofs of, derived from testimony of Scripture, *mission and work of Christ, the apostolic appointment, the promise of pardon, and its actual enjoyment*:—the properties of Divine mercy . 161

## LECTURE XII.

## MORAL PERFECTIONS OF GOD—WISDOM.

Knowledge and wisdom, how distinguished, and how attributed to the Deity:—wisdom manifested in the adoption of good ends, and in the choice of means:—illustration, material universe, construction of the human body:—the vertebrae of the human neck, a display of wisdom:—animal joints:—the process of animal nutrition, a further illustration of:—the system of blood-vessels . . . . . 177

## LECTURE XIII.

## MORAL PERFECTIONS OF GOD—WISDOM.

Substance of preceding lecture; the structure and position of the arteries:—the duration and perfection of the system of circulation, a proof of wisdom:—God's providential government, a display of:—unwilling agents made to exhibit his wisdom:—*unlikely* means also:—the work of redemption, the discovery and execution of the plan, the method of bringing sinners to partake of its advantages, and the ultimate end, show forth the manifold wisdom of God:—lessons . . . . . 192

## SECOND SERIES.

## DIVINE UNITY, AND THE REVEALED DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY.

## LECTURE I.

## THE UNITY OF GOD.

The discovery of, by unaided reason, doubtful:—the argument, *à priori*, of Dr. Samuel Clarke, inconclusive:—Dr. Doddridge's argument, in support of, deficient:—the only conclusive *à priori* argument:—the argument, *à posteriori*, of Dr. Dwight and others, unsound:—uniformity of plan in creation the grand proof, supplied by reason:—the objection, derived from man's limited acquaintance with the vast universe, answered:—the objection, from the existence of evil, answered:—unity of design, the amount of proof afforded by:—the doctrine, a fundamental truth of Divine revelation . . . . . Page 211

## LECTURE II.

## THE TRINITY.

This doctrine, the basis of the plan of redemption:—explanation of the doctrine, and extent of our knowledge:—Dr. Pye Smith's views:—Dr. Jamieson's:—further statements in illustration of orthodox views:—Post-Nicene Fathers:—Sabellianism, and its fundamental error:—Arianism and the Council of Nice:—ecclesiastical terms, meaning and application of, as adopted by the Arians and Sabellians . . . . . 221

## LECTURE III.

## THE TRINITY.—(Continued.)

Definition of terms:—the unwarrantable speculations of the ancient church traced to their sources, and examined:—generation of the Son, and procession of the Holy Ghost:—the sense in which the term Son is applied to the second person in the Trinity:—posteriority, derivation and inferiority implied in that term:—the views of the ancient church degrading to the Son of God . . . 239

## LECTURE IV.

## THE TRINITY.—(Continued.)

Examination of passages thought to support the idea of eternal generation:—passages that afford evidence that the terms Son, begotten, &c. refer to Christ as God-man:—objections to the latter view, answered,—first objection, an

argument in support of the doctrine of the Trinity is lost; *second*, he is called Son before his incarnation; *third*, he ought to be called the Son of the Holy Ghost also; *fourth*, his Sonship and his incarnation are distinct; *fifth*, the titles, the Christ, the Son of God, have no meaning, if there be no distinction between his Sonship and his office of Mediator; *sixth* objection, the gift of the Son to redeem man is such as to involve the idea of eternal Sonship Page 257

## LECTURE V.

THE TRINITY.—(*Continued.*)

The preceding lectures on the subject, substance of:—proofs of the doctrine of the Trinity:—*First*; evidence in support of, derived from peculiar grammatical construction in the Hebrew Scriptures:—the doctrine of the Trinity alone meets the exigences of this peculiarity:—the efforts of Anti-Trinitarian writers to solve this anomaly shown to be insufficient:—Mr. Belsham's attempt to set aside the testimony of the Scriptures, examined:—Dr. J. Pye Smith's review of the entire subject, adopted . . . . . 272

## LECTURE VI.

THE TRINITY.—(*Continued.*)

Old and New Testament Scriptures, in reference to this important doctrine, throw mutual light on each other:—the form of baptism, a proof:—objections to this proof answered:—a proof of, derived from the form of the apostolic benediction:—from the language of John, Rev. i. 4, 5:—passages that afford auxiliary or indirect proof:—Isaiah xlviii. 16, examined, proof afforded by:—Isaiah lxi. 1, the evidence in support of this doctrine:—the threefold repetition of the name of God, the doctrine of the Trinity, the basis of:—passages in which a clear distinction is observed between two persons, each of whom called God:—concluding observations . . . . . 292

## THIRD SERIES.

## THE WORKS OF GOD.

## LECTURE I.

## WORKS OF GOD—CREATION OF MATTER.

Works of God an illustration of his purposes or decrees:—topics discussed in this series, with definition of what is meant by CREATION:—import of the

term *בְּרֵאשִׁית*:—creation a fact:—arguments against the eternity of matter:—creation the work of God:—the power of creating not transferable:—the beings and the things created . . . . . Page 317

## LECTURE II.

## WORKS OF GOD—THE CREATION OF ANGELS.

The Scriptures the exclusive source of our knowledge respecting this class of intelligent beings:—their rank and station:—nature and attributes:—the employment of angels:—the duties of angels in connection with mankind:—the specific ways in which they are of assistance to the godly:—the purposes for which their ministry is employed . . . . . 331

## LECTURE III.

## WORKS OF GOD—FALLEN ANGELS.

The term *angels* represents two classes of beings:—the existence of evil spirits denied:—the ground of belief in their existence:—the amount of our information respecting their original state, and their defection:—the cause of their fall:—consequences of their fall:—the manner in which they attempt to accomplish their wicked designs:—their ability to inflict physical as well as spiritual evil . . . . . 348

## LECTURE IV.

## WORKS OF GOD—THE CREATION OF MAN.

The subject, one of the first importance:—the Scriptures afford the only rational information on the primitive condition of man:—the Mosaic record on the subject:—the time of man's creation:—the constituent parts of man:—the human soul:—the argument for its materiality:—the validity of, examined . . . . . 368

## LECTURE V.

## WORKS OF GOD—THE SOUL NOT MATERIAL.

The substance of the argument, that thought and sensation are the result of organization:—incompatibility of thought and sensation with the known or admitted properties of matter:—proof of:—the materialist's only escape:—resorts to exceptions, instances:—conclusion drawn from the instances adduced, and from the preceding discussion:—Locke's opinion:—personal identity incompatible with the materiality of the mind . . . . . 382

## LECTURE VI.

## „ WORKS OF GOD—THE SOUL IMMATERIAL, OBJECTIONS.

Philosophical objections, a preliminary statement:—*first* objection, things must have common properties to act on each other:—*second* objection, the apparent extinction of thought and sensation:—*third* objection, the phenomena of thinking inexplicable on the immaterial principle:—The testimony of Scripture:—the *first* class of passages, those that intimate generally a distinction between matter and mind:—*second* class, those that affirm or imply the existence of the soul after the body dies:—*third* class, those that exhibit the souls of departed saints in their separate state:—the specific testimony of John . . . . . Page 399

## LECTURE VII.

## WORKS OF GOD—TIME, MANNER, AND OBJECT OF CREATION.

The subject of the lecture:—the time consumed in the work itself:—period of time consumed, a source of instruction:—the creation of the material world, an emblem of the spiritual:—the Sabbath:—period elapsed since creation:—infidel objections, derived from the chronology of creation, answered:—the time of the year in which creation took place:—manner of creation:—the object of creation . . . . . 417

## ERRATA.

- Page 63, line 20, *for* omniscience, *read* omnipotence.  
 — 128, — 10, *for* on, *read* or.  
 — 151, — 8, *for* reference, *read* reverence.  
 — 168, — 11, *for* cast, *read* cart.  
 — 274, — 14, *for* description, *read* ascription.  
 — 282, — 19, *for* natural, *read* unnatural.  
 — 282, — 20, *for* intelligible, *read* unintelligible.  
 — 328, — 3, *for* To cause, *read* Not to cause.  
 — 328, — 6, *for* power. But, *read* power, but.  
 — 341, — 7, *for* confirmed, *read* conformed.  
 — 401, — 34, *for* quicked, *read* quickened.  
 — 413, — 6, *for* in, *read* from.

MEMOIR  
OF THE  
REV. GEORGE PAYNE, LL.D.  
WITH NOTICES OF HIS WRITINGS.

---

INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS.

WHEN Sir James Mackintosh was applied to by Dr. Olinthus Gregory, and requested to furnish a sketch of the literary and intellectual character of their mutual friend, the late Rev. Robert Hall, he replied to the communication, partly, in the following terms:—"I own to you that I prefer the old custom of prefixing a modest preface by way of memoir, to the modern practice of writing huge narratives of lives in which there are no events; which seems to me a tasteless parade, and a sure way of transmitting nothing to posterity."

The preference intimated in this paragraph is consonant with my own views and inclinations, and would, I am persuaded, have met the ready concurrence of my venerated friend, whose life is here briefly narrated, had it been possible to have consulted him upon the subject. Moreover, his career presented no extraordinary incidents, no strange, uncommon occurrences; nor was there anything in his position or circumstances to startle, or dazzle, or astonish mankind. His path through life, both public and private, though presenting a marked and unmistakable development of



great excellence, was, nevertheless, accompanied by no glitter, surrounded by no glare; but was rather the gradual and steady unfolding of that light, and life, and love, which shone in him "more and more to the perfect day."

Hence it will be seen that, in this simple sketch of his sayings and doings, we have nothing of the exciting and the marvellous to communicate. Nor is it needed. Those who knew the departed one require no such stimulus to impress upon them a continued sense of his inestimable worth; and those to whom he was personally a stranger may be referred to the present volumes, and to the works which he published during his lifetime, as the best evidences of his mental superiority, his moral principles, and his religious devotedness.

## SECTION I.

### PARENTAGE, CHILDHOOD, AND YOUTH.

GEORGE PAYNE was born at Stow-on-the-Wold, Gloucestershire, on the 17th of September, 1781. Here his father, Mr. Alexander Payne, at that time resided, and carried on the business of a cooper. In October, 1769, Mr. Payne married Miss Mary Dyer, of the parish of Bampton. They had eleven children, seven of whom died in their infancy. Mr. Payne, at the period of his marriage, was a Churchman; subsequently he joined a Baptist church at Bengtworth, some distance from Stow, then under the pastoral care of the Rev. Iaw Butterworth. Soon after his admission to the fellowship of this Christian community, he evidenced great zeal for the salvation of souls; and being a man of some ability, as well as of undoubted piety, he began to exercise his gifts in public prayer and exhortation, and, in process of time, became an acceptable village preacher. In 1783, he removed to Walgrave, in Northamptonshire; and supplied the pulpit of the Baptist Chapel in that place for two years. On the 20th of June, 1785, his wife was baptized, and admitted to membership with the church. About this time he received an invitation to the pastorate, which he accepted; and on the 6th of July, 1785, was ordained. On this occasion several ministers of the neighbourhood assembled, and

took parts in the service:—the usual questions were proposed by the Rev. John Evans; the Rev. John Sutcliffe offered the ordination prayer; the Rev. John Ryland, jun., (afterwards Dr. Ryland) gave the minister a charge, founded on Rom. xii. 11; and the Rev. Andrew Fuller preached to the people from Heb. xiii. 17.

Mr. Payne was a man of sterling integrity; consistent piety, and great usefulness. He was much esteemed as a minister and pastor, and had the satisfaction of witnessing many additions to his flock; several members of which were sent out by the church into the work of the ministry, to his great comfort and joy.

In Mr. Fuller's Life I find the following reference to the state of religion, in 1791, in the sphere of this good man's labours. "Towards the latter end of this summer, I heard of some revival of religion about Walgrave and Guilsborough; and that the means of it were their setting apart days of fasting and prayer. Hence I thought that we had been long praying for the revival of God's cause, and the spread of the gospel among the heathen, &c., and perhaps God would begin with us at home first. I was particularly affected with this thought, by finding it in the sixty-seventh psalm, which I was expounding about the same time:—O that God's being merciful to *us*, and blessing *us*, might be the means of his way being made known upon earth, and his saving health among all nations; at least among a part of them."

From the above extract, it would seem that the excellent pastor at Walgrave, and his people, had, at least incidentally, something to do with that spirit of burning desire awakened, at this period, in the breast of Fuller, and also in that of Carey and others; which issued in the formation of the Baptist Missionary Society, and afterwards gave an impulse to the missionary spirit in other Christian communities.

In 1819, Mr. Payne was taken from his work on earth to his recompence in heaven. He was not laid aside from his beloved employment more than three or four Sabbaths previous to his departure. He preached his last sermon from Job xxx. 23: "For I know *that* thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living." Many, while listening to this discourse, thought they should hear his voice in the pulpit no more; and so the event proved, for he never preached again. In the Baptist Chapel at

Walgrave, a tablet is erected to his memory, and that of his wife, bearing the subjoined inscription :—

“Sacred to the memory of the Rev. Alexander Payne; who departed this life Feb. 13th, 1819. Aged 77 years. He was Pastor of the Church assembling in this place for nearly 33 years. And also of his wife, Mary Payne; who departed this life January 5th, 1814. Aged 71 years. ‘The memory of the just is blessed.’”

George Payne, the youngest son of these worthy and pious persons, was taken by his parents from Stow to Walgrave, at the period before referred to, when he was scarcely two years old. From his infancy, his physical frame was spare and delicate; but his intellectual faculties gave early promise of future eminence; while his affectionate, open-hearted disposition made him lovely as a child, and rendered him a favourite wherever he was known. His earliest mental training was conducted at home, by the same tender parental care that watched his moral developments, and sought, with anxious and prayerful solicitude, his spiritual welfare. Home tuition was well adapted to his quiet, retiring habits, and, accompanied by higher and better influences, was the means of implanting in his infant heart those seeds of piety which, in after years, produced such gracious and abundant fruit. One of his earliest inclinations was to be a minister; and oftentimes were his parents now amused, and now struck with interest, while observing him lead his sisters to a retired part of the house, that he might preach to them; constituting the youngest his clerk, and calling upon her to lead the singing. The inclination now adverted to, it seems, never forsook him; but rather grew in strength, as he advanced onwards in the pathway of life, until its incipient buddings ripened into a deliberate choice.

At a suitable age he was sent to a school in Walgrave, presided over by a man who exhibited some oddities, both in his person and manners, but who, nevertheless, took pains with the boys committed to his care, and did his best to impart to them sound and useful instruction. Here George was remarkable for his diligence, modesty, and perseverance; and is said, by a survivor, to have made “great proficiency in learning.” The village pedagogue was proud of his apt and promising pupil; delighted to boast of his attainments,—to predict for him a prosperous course in the acquisition of

knowledge; and took no small share of credit to himself for having cultivated the virgin soil of his mind, and "taught his young ideas how to shoot."

At this period his love of reading was intense, and was freely indulged; nor was it satisfied with such books as are usually put into the hands of children. His father's library was ransacked and explored: each volume was subjected to inspection, and diligent perusal; so that before he had completed his fourteenth year he had gone through all the books which it contained. To him this was possibly no very difficult task, as the library, in all likelihood, was not very large; while his eagerness and constancy, in seeking to master its contents, were great and untiring. Such a self-imposed task, however, indicates the early bent and disposition of his mind, and discovers the boy laying foundations, and accumulating materials for that range of observation, that patience of investigation, and that habit of close thinking and reasoning which afterwards distinguished the man. Something peculiar too, and out of the ordinary course of childish inclinations and predilections, must have been in him, and held influence over him, to make him happy with such occupation as is here indicated; for, without determining absolutely what works his father's library furnished, we may take it for granted that it was not dissimilar, in its contents, to the libraries of other ministers in like circumstances. Hence, probably, it furnished theological works, both theoretic and practical; commentaries on the Scriptures; philosophical and scientific treatises; together with history, religious biography, &c. Now for a young lad to delight in books of this order, and to find his chief—his daily employment in their perusal, and to be so intent on making himself acquainted with their treasures, as to forego the sports and pastimes usually pursued by persons of his juvenile years, argues the existence of a bias towards the grave, the solid, the judicious, the really beneficial, as is not common among boys of his tender age.

That such was his taste, and, as the consequence, that he possessed at this period a shrewd discernment of right and wrong, together with inclinations and affections which yielded devout homage to the claims of God, and to the best interests of human kind, is illustrated by the following circumstance, communicated

by a gentleman who was once his companion and schoolfellow, and who still survives. "His father, who was a very excellent man, and who gained the esteem and love of all who knew him, was in the habit of preaching in a small village at some distance from his home. One evening, as he was preparing to go out on his accustomed visit, the weather being very tempestuous, he observed, in the midst of his family circle, that the storm would prevent the people from assembling; and as he did not suppose there would be more than one or two present, he thought it would be scarcely worth while for him to go. George, who was then but a little boy, heard this, and, looking up, quickly yet gravely said—'But, father, do you not think that one soul is worth trying to save?' 'Right, my boy,' answered his father,—'I will go.' He went, and, to his comfort and astonishment, found a larger number than usual of the poor villagers had assembled to hear the gospel; and he subsequently learned that his preaching that evening had been blessed to one of the congregation, who was thenceforward turned 'from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.' "

When the means and appliances of the home circle, and the village school, which had trained the child, were found to be inadequate to tutor the youth, and when he had fairly exhausted his father's books, it became desirable that other and extended means of instruction should be provided. At this time the neighbouring town of Northampton possessed an academical establishment, the high character of which was known far and wide. Mr. Comfield, the proprietor and conductor of this school, was a man remarkable for his scientific and literary acquirements, for his success in imparting knowledge, as well as for his attachment to the youth placed under his charge, and his concern for their educational progress and moral cultivation. To the care of this able instructor George was committed, soon after he had attained his fourteenth year; and while a pupil at Northampton, the same diligence in prosecuting his studies, and the same thoughtful behaviour which had marked his childhood at home, characterized his deportment now that he was removed from parental observation, and found himself in the midst of a number of free, light-hearted companions.

His old schoolfellow, from whom I have already quoted, speaks of him, at this period, as one who "was much loved for his kindly disposition, and who was always fonder of amusing himself by reading than by joining with the other boys in their juvenile games and sports."

This being his character at Northampton school, it is no wonder that he made considerable advances in the several branches of learning to which his attention was directed, nor that he should become a favourite with his respected tutor; so that, after being his pupil for several years, he should remain with him, subsequently, as his assistant, and aid him in the important task of training the young people surrendered to his care. In this occupation he continued till the providence of God opened a way for prosecuting studies more directly appropriate to the duties of the Christian ministry.

As my venerated friend kept no diary, nor left behind him any record of his Christian experience, nor of the means of his conversion to God, beyond the statement contained in a letter addressed to the Committee of Hoxton Academy, (and which will be found on page xxv.,) I can furnish no particular account of the hidden workings of his religious life. In the letter adverted to, he refers to a conversation with his honoured father; and to some affecting circumstances connected with the engagement of a young friend of his, for the first time, in public prayer, as means which led to more decided impression than he had previously experienced, and ultimately to conversion. But to ascertain, with exactitude, the moment when a sinner is enabled to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for pardon and eternal life, and to be able to define with clearness the instrumentality employed in the renewal of the heart, is of far less importance than to know, by unmistakable evidence, that the thing has been done. Happily, in the case of George Payne, both for his own personal consolation, and for the satisfaction of all who knew him, the proofs that his heart had been brought under the dominion of Divine grace were too manifest to be denied; for in temper and conduct, both now and through life, he was enabled to exhibit those fruits of the Spirit which serve at once to ascertain and to adorn the Christian character.

There is another point in my friend's history on which I am still more at a loss for information. I refer to the steps by which he was led to prefer the exercise of his ministerial talents and capabilities among Congregationalists of the Independent denomination. Being the son of a Baptist minister, and surrounded, from his infancy, with those who held the opinions, and were devoted to the practices of that body of Christians to which his parents belonged; having also Mr. Cornfield, a member of that community, first for his tutor, and then for a daily companion and friend, who, from the nature of their connexion, must have possessed considerable influence over him; it might have been expected that he would imbibe the views held by Anti-pædo-baptists, and make his profession as a Christian, and choose the sphere of his toils as a minister within the borders of their enclosure. That this was not so cannot, I think, in his case, be referred to anything approaching to whim, or caprice, or prejudice; but must be resolved into that calm consideration, that searching inquiry, that conscientious preference for what he found to be true, or believed, after careful investigation, to be true, which distinguished his career through life, down to its very close. No one, who knew George Payne, would imagine for a moment that, on the matter now adverted to, he formed his opinions rashly, or came to his conclusions hastily, or that he was driven to them by the mere force of surrounding circumstances; and the more especially as all the influences, to which I have adverted as attendant upon his early days, must have tended to lead his mind in another direction. That he decided in favour of becoming a minister among Pædo-baptists must have been, with him, the fruit of diligent examination, and the result of deep conviction that, in so doing, he was right in his interpretation and understanding of the word of God. Without this, I am persuaded, he never would have pursued the course which he adopted.

Towards the end of the year 1801, he was introduced to the notice of the late Thomas Wilson, Esq., at that time the respected Treasurer and munificent friend of Hoxton Academy. The correspondence which passed between them being satisfactory to Mr. Wilson, he instructed his young friend to make formal application to the Committee for admission to that Institution;

and, accordingly, Mr. Payne addressed to them the following letter:—

NORTHAMPTON, Dec. 7th, 1801.

Gentlemen,

Sensible of the advantage of a liberal education for a public speaker, I have been induced to apply for admission to Hoxton Academy. By Mr. Wilson I have been informed that, in order to this, a letter must be addressed to the Committee, containing an account of religious experience, doctrinal sentiments, and reasons for wishing the ministry.

I was from a child rather fond of reading, particularly historical facts and wonderful occurrences. Such books, whenever they fell in my way, I read with eagerness and avidity; amongst which, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, and *Holy War*, afforded me great pleasure, and I hope were not perused without some profit and advantage. But the first thing that so affected my mind, as to leave an abiding impression, was a serious conversation I had with my father, when about the age of 14, concerning the duty of prayer. He represented to me that a prayerless soul was a Christless soul,—questioned me whether I had lived in the neglect of this duty,—[and] represented the awful state and condition of all those who leave the world without an interest in the Redeemer. This conversation, which was much longer than I could here relate, sunk deep in my heart. I was also much affected about this time with hearing a young friend, with whom I was particularly intimate, engage in prayer, almost the first time. These circumstances led me seriously to reflect on my state and condition, and eventually issued, I trust, in real conversion.

My sentiments are Calvinistic. I believe that there are three equal persons in the Godhead;—that, in consequence of the fall of Adam, we bring into the world with us a disposition prone to everything that is bad, and averse to everything that is good;—that sovereign, efficacious grace is manifested in regeneration;—that we are justified by the imputed righteousness of Christ;—that salvation is of grace, not of works;—[and] that God has, from all eternity, predestinated a certain number to be saved. I believe in the final perseverance of all true believers;—[in] a future state of retribution,—the eternal happiness of the righteous, and everlasting misery of the finally impenitent. Concerning baptism—I am decidedly of opinion that baptism by sprinkling, or pouring, and administered to the infant offspring of Christian parents, is true, scriptural baptism; and though I do not think immersion essentially wrong, I am led by several considerations to prefer baptism by sprinkling or pouring.

Respecting my reasons for wishing the ministry, I trust I am actuated by an ardent desire to promote the glory of God, and the good of souls; and if my weak efforts for that purpose should be crowned with a Divine blessing, I am sure his name shall have all the praise.

I thought it might be unnecessary to give a more particular account of myself and situation, at present, as I have done that in a preceding letter to



Mr. Wilson. \* The accompanying letter is from Mr. Drake, a Pædo-baptist minister in this town, with whom I am very well acquainted.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your most obedient Servant,

G. PAYNE.

*To the Committee of Hoxton Academy.*

Soon after the transmission of the above letter, he was summoned to a personal appearance before the Committee; when, having passed, to their satisfaction, the usual examinations, his name was inscribed on the books of Hoxton Academy; and he entered the house in the beginning of 1802, being then a little more than 20 years of age.

## SECTION II.

### STUDENT AT HOXTON AND GLASGOW.

ON his removal to London, in addition to his ardent and steady devotement to the new and enlarged facilities presented for the attainment of knowledge, one of his first cares was to secure the advantages of Christian fellowship. For this purpose he sought and obtained admission to the church of Christ assembling in the 'Weigh-House Chapel, at that time under the pastoral care of the Rev. John Clayton, senior. At the hands of this "good minister of Jesus Christ," he received the ordinance of baptism; and to his judicious, affectionate counsels, his kind and almost parental regard, during his stay in the metropolis, he frequently adverted, in after life; acknowledging that he was placed by it under deep and ineffaceable obligations.

In his fellowship with this Christian community he was joined, the following year, by his valued friend and fellow-student Joseph Fletcher, who, on his admission to Hoxton Academy, in 1803, united himself to the church at the Weigh House. Mr. Fletcher's

\* I have inquired, in the proper quarter, for this letter. Diligent search has been made; but it cannot be found. I regret this exceedingly, as it, doubtless, contains an extended account of his religious life and present circumstances; and would, in all probability, disclose the steps by which he was led to renounce the peculiar views of baptism held by his parents, and the reasons which prevailed with him to seek a place in the ministry in the Independent body.

biographer states that, — “among his fellow-students, he found companions formed for friendship, to whom he unbosomed himself without reserve, and with growing confidence and attachment;” and then says that, in his letters to his relatives at home, he refers, among others, to George Payne, as one of his most intimate friends.\* Nor can we doubt but that the mutual attendance of these two young men on the same ministry; their communion in Christian ordinances in the same place; and their converse as they walked to and from the same sanctuary, tended to cement that esteem, and love, and sanctified friendship which lasted while they lived on earth, and is now blessedly renewed in the heavenly world.\*

In his college vacations, Mr. Payne usually visited Walgrave; spending his time in the society of his revered parents, and beloved sisters and friends, and preaching in his father's pulpit, to the great delight and edification of the farmers and villagers, to all of whom he was known and greatly endeared. On one of these occasions his friend, Joseph Fletcher, accompanied him. During their stay, they made an excursion to Northampton, and paid a visit to his former tutor, Mr. Comfield. To their great joy, there they found the Rev. Robert Hall, and spent a long evening in his society, conversing on a variety of metaphysical subjects, on which Mr. Hall descanted with wonderful clearness and fluency. His listeners were charmed and amazed; wondering at the intellectual prowess he displayed, and delighted with the glowing illustrations he adduced. “It was in that house,” said Mr. Payne, when he gave me and a brother minister a narration of these circumstances, “that my attention was first directed to metaphysics. On that evening my bent toward the study became more fixed; and since then metaphysical subjects have been among my favourite pursuits.”

At Hoxton, as at Northampton, he was the prudent, diligent, pains-taking student; and withal, the meek, humble, devout Christian; living in daily habits of communion with God, and reflecting, without noise, or parade, or ostentation, the blessed image of his Divine Redeemer. Hence he commended himself to the favourable notice and high esteem of his Tutors; to the cordial regard of the Treasurer and Committee of the Institution; was respected and

\* Memoirs of Rev. Joseph Fletcher, D.D., p. 42.

beloved by his fellow-students; and was ever a welcome visitant in the Christian families with whom he occasionally associated.

"In the spring of 1804," (I am quoting from the Life of Mr. Wilson,) "the attention of the Committee of Hoxton Academy was directed to the propriety of sending some of the students to Scotland, for the purpose of going through a university course of classical and philosophical studies.—April 13. The Treasurer reported the substance of a communication which he had held with Dr. Abraham Rees, relative to a bequest of the late Dr. Daniel Williams, for the support of Theological Students at the University of Glasgow; and that Dr. Williams's Trustees, to whom the subject had been mentioned by Dr. Rees, had manifested a readiness to grant the benefits of that fund to two of the Hoxton students.—June 8. The offer of Dr. Williams's Trustees to admit two students on this foundation was accepted—subject to the approbation of the approaching general meeting. The Tutors and Treasurer were also appointed a Sub-committee to correspond with suitable persons in Glasgow, and to prepare instructions for the conduct of the students while at the University. The Tutors recommended Mr. George Payne, and Mr. Joseph Fletcher, as suitable persons to be sent to Glasgow."\*

When this determination was made known to the young men, Mr. Fletcher wrote to his parents, and communicated the matter in the following touching terms:—"As it is thus decided, I cannot avoid saying, that two more kindred souls could not have been selected. Oh, may the good-will of Him that dwelt in the bush ever go with us! May every advantage and opportunity of improvement be rightly used, and all we are and have be consecrated to the service of Him who left heaven for earth, and exchanged a crown and a throne for the cross on Calvary! *His* we are by ten thousand obligations. Oh, may we not draw back unto perdition, but truly believe to salvation! Payne and I have agreed to devote an hour to prayer this evening on the occasion. I trust we can both sincerely say,—'If thy presence, O Lord, go not with us, carry us not up hence.'"<sup>†</sup>

In October, 1804, these devout young men wended their way

\* Memoir of Thomas Wilson, Esq., p. 275.

† Memoirs of the Rev. Joseph Fletcher, D.D., p. 47.

to Glasgow, accompanied by their mutual friend, Mr. H. F. Burder, whose respected father, with the approval of the Hoxton Committee, had determined on sending him also to the University. Their path had been prepared by Mr. Wilson, the indefatigable Treasurer of the Academy, who corresponded with the late Rev. Greville Ewing on the subject, and committed them to his friendly care.\* Mr. Ewing and his amiable lady received them with great kindness, directed them in seeking a suitable domiciliary abode, and introduced them to a large circle of religious friends; and among the rest to Mr. (now Dr.) Wardlaw. With this gentleman they spent many pleasant and happy hours, during their seasons of relaxation; and for his recollections of the subject of this sketch, at the period to which I am referring, the reader is requested to turn to pages cxxxiii. and cxxxviii. of his "Reminiscences."

Messrs. Payne and Fletcher were still considered Hoxton students; and a correspondence was kept up between them and the Committee, as appears by the following extracts from the minutes:—"Dec. 14, 1804. A letter from Mr. Fletcher, and another from Mr. Payne, the two students who have lately gone to Glasgow, were read. They were very encouraging and satisfactory.—Jan. 11th, 1805. Letters from Mr. Fletcher and Mr. Payne were read, giving very satisfactory accounts of their diligence in the prosecution of their studies, and of their efforts in instructing the children of a Sabbath-school, and also introducing family worship, and lending religious books in the family in which they board.—Jan. 17th, 1806. A letter was read from Mr. George Payne, one of the Society's students at Glasgow; also a letter from the Rev. Greville Ewing, giving a very satisfactory account of the character and abilities of the three students there."†

The venerated survivor of the youthful three, Dr. Burder, in a letter to Dr. Fletcher's biographer, thus speaks of their mutual position and intercourse at this period:—"You are well aware that your honoured father, Dr. Payne, and I, were intimately associated together during the whole term of our college studies at the Uni-

\* *Vide* Memoir of Thomas Wilson, Esq., p. 276. An excellent and judicious letter from Mr. W. is published here. I should be happy to transfer it to these pages was there sufficient room.

† Memoir of Thomas Wilson, Esq., p. 279.

versity of Glasgow. We entered the same classes, occupied the same lodgings, and pursued precisely the same academic course. I have often felt grateful to the Giver of all good, when I have reflected on the many advantages accruing from such companions in study as the two with whom I was favoured. On leaving home, at that early period of life, and entering on studies, some of which had proved injurious to some minds not well established in Christian principles, it was very beneficial to us to converse, as we did without reserve, on all the philosophical and metaphysical, as well as theological subjects, which came before us, and to caution and fortify each other whenever occasion required. Our opportunities also of devotional engagements together, both ordinary and special, were very beneficial, and tended to inspire a confidence in each other's principles and character, which I believe has never been weakened or suspended."† \* \* \* To this extract, I may add Dr. Burder's testimony to the separate character of his friend Payne at this time, contained in a sketch of his life which appeared in the pages of the *Evangelical Magazine*. "During the vigorous prosecution of his college studies, in which he honourably distinguished himself by assiduity and proficiency, it was evident to me, by indications not to be mistaken, that he had, without reserve, consecrated to the service of his God and Saviour his mental energies, his days and hours, his studies and acquisitions. Nor, in the cultivation of the intellect, did he forget the still greater importance of 'keeping with all diligence the heart.' His soul's health was the object of his daily care. He felt the weight of the precept,—'Exercise thyself unto godliness;' and beyond most men whom I have known, he was, I am persuaded, authorized to say, both at that period, and in later life, 'Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man.'"‡

In the early part of 1807, a short time before his term at Glasgow expired, he was applied to by "Mr. Ewing and the deacons of his church to preach occasionally at the Tabernacle, with the view, in case it should be mutually agreeable to the church and himself, of being associated with Mr. E. as co-pastor." The sphere of use-

† Life of the Rev. Joseph Fletcher, D.D., pp. 101, 102.

‡ *Evangelical Magazine*, 1848, p. 396.

fulness, thus presented to his notice, was honourable and extensive, as the church numbered between six and seven hundred members, and the congregation consisted of nearly three thousand persons. This was rather a tempting offer for so young a man; but he thought proper to decline it, and in a letter to Mr. Wilson states that "his predilection for England, the opposition of his father and mother to his remaining permanently in Scotland, and some other reasons, had decided him to take this course."

Preceding paragraphs are sufficient to show that, in the persevering prosecution of his studies at the University of Glasgow, he was actuated by the highest and holiest considerations; it was his happiness also to be stimulated by attestations of success in the attainment of several college prizes, and the esteem of all the learned Professors on whom he attended. On the completion of his course, in the spring of 1807, he took his degree as Master of Arts, and then bent his steps homeward; and soon after visited London, on a matter to which the reader's attention will next be directed.

### SECTION III.

#### MARRIAGE—ASSISTANT MINISTER AT LEEDS AND HULL.

WHILE residing in the metropolis, as an inmate of Hoxton Academy, and among the family circles to which he was invited, he had made the acquaintance of a daughter of Mr. Alexander Gibbs, a corn-factor, and a member of the Scotch Church, who, in his early days, had come from Scotland, and fixed his abode in London. Mr. Gibbs was a truly religious man, and died in the faith and hope of the gospel, when his daughter was yet a child. This young lady resided, with her widowed mother, in the neighbourhood of Hoxton; and, for many years, they had both been members of the church assembling for worship in the Academy Chapel. In his visits to the family, Mr. Payne had observed the piety, filial affection, and amiability of disposition displayed by Miss Gibbs; and had entertained towards her sentiments of high esteem and regard. Prudently, however, he refrained from declaring his attachment, lest his mind should be diverted from the

assiduous pursuit of his studies. His caution, and entire conscientiousness in this matter, furnishes another evidence of the wisdom and holy rectitude which governed his course; and was amply recompensed, not only in the greater ease and freedom with which he prosecuted his literary avocations, and the self-approbation he felt in the rightness of his self-denial, but also in the comfort and happiness which he afterwards realized in the marriage relation.

But his term at Glasgow was now finished, and he was about to enter the field of ministerial labour, having a prospective engagement, as assistant, with the late Rev. Edward Parsons of Leeds. Consequently, he made known his wishes to the object of his choice, and was happy to find them reciprocated. The concurrence of her mother, of his own parents, and of all other parties concerned, was obtained; and on the 30th of October, 1807, he and Miss Gibbs entered into the marriage relation, and shortly after were located at Leeds.

His engagement with Mr. Parsons lasted but for one year. He then went to Hull, and supplied the pulpit of the Rev. George Lambert, in conjunction with that respected minister. His labours proving acceptable, he received an invitation from the church to become Mr. Lambert's permanent coadjutor. To this invitation he replied in the terms of the following letter:—

August 28th, 1808.

*To the Church of Christ assembling in Fish-Street Chapel, under the pastoral care of the Rev. G. Lambert.*

Dear Brethren and Sisters,

The expression of your wishes that I should continue amongst you, for the purpose of relieving my honoured father in Christ from a part of those services which advancing years have rendered it improper for him to bear, has occasioned frequent and fervent supplications for Divine direction.

I trust it has been my sincere desire to ascertain the path of duty; and, as far as I can judge, by reflecting upon the events which have led me here, and the circumstances which have occurred since I came, I think I am obeying the leadings of Providence, when I signify, as this letter is intended to do, my compliance with your invitation.

May the God of all grace render our connexion a mutual blessing.

I trust it will be my aim, in all my public ministrations, to lead sinners to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to establish his people in the faith, comfort, and

obedience of the gospel; to preach the truth as it is in Jesus; and, as far as I know it, to declare unto you the whole counsel of God.

May I therefore, my dear friends, beg an interest in your prayers, that my own understanding may be increasingly enlightened; that I may feel more deeply the infinite importance of the truths I have dispensed, and intend to dispense amongst you; and that the whole of my spirit and conduct may illustrate and enforce my pulpit addresses.

Much of a minister's comfort and usefulness depends, under God, upon the prayers of his people. The hands of your dear and venerable pastor have, I doubt not, been frequently upheld by your supplications on his behalf. The abundant blessing of God upon his labours is an undeniable proof of this. Let them not be withheld from a stripling engaged as a son with a father, in the same cause, and whose earnest desire it is that a double portion of that spirit with which the grace of God has distinguished the elder may rest upon the younger.

I remain, dear Brethren and Sisters,  
Yours affectionately in our common Lord,  
G. PAYNE.

At the commencement of the year 1809 he sent to the press his first publication, entitled "Youth admonished to submit to the Guidance of God; a Sermon preached in Fish-Street Chapel, Kingston-upon-Hull, January 8th, 1809: published at the request of the Church." This discourse passed through two editions. The text is Jer. iii. 4: "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth?" The preacher considers—"1. The importance and necessity of a guide, especially in the season of youth. 2. The danger of confiding in some pretended guides, whose directions are frequently implicitly followed. 3. The important advantages which result from trusting to the guidance of God; and 4. The sentiments and feelings which may be supposed to be included in an acquiescence with the exhortation contained in the text." These points are illustrated and enforced with considerable pertinency and earnestness. The sermon discovers sincere yearnings of affectionate desire for the spiritual profit of the young people to whom it was addressed; and some evidence of the estimate which was formed of it, by those who heard it delivered, may be gathered from the fact that the "Church requested" its publication, and also that it went into a second edition.

Twelve months had not passed since this maiden effort of his



pen was printed, before we find him engaged in a metaphysical discussion with the justly celebrated Dr. Edward Williams, at that time the respected Tutor of Rotherham Academy. Dr. W. had published his "Essay on the Equity of Divine Government, and the Sovereignty of Divine Grace." Mr. Lambert read the book with high approbation, and wrote to Dr. W., saying—"You have my most grateful acknowledgments, as being the instrument of communicating much light to my mind, on a variety of subjects, which had often perplexed and sometimes confounded me," &c. Mr. Payne also perused the volume, and, generally, with approval too; but his metaphysical subtlety, and, possibly, a bias toward some notions which farther consideration and experience led him to correct, induced him to take some exceptions to certain statements which he found there. These points, it appears, became subjects of remark between himself and Mr. Lambert, and some others; and it was suggested to him to write to Dr. Williams upon them. At length Mr. Bowden (who was, I believe, at this time, one of the deacons,) communicated with Dr. Williams, and, through him, Dr. W. sent to Mr. Payne a message, desiring to hear from him on the matter. Thus appealed to, Mr. P. drew up and transmitted the letter which will be found below; and obtained from Dr. W. a full and extended answer, which led him to renewed examination of the points in debate, and to some modification of his views. The topics presented in these documents are similar to those which he afterwards discussed with Dr. Wardlaw, when his opinions were more matured and settled, as may be seen by turning to the Doctor's "Reminiscences," pages cxlii., cxlviii. Further and *special* reasons for their present publication are assigned in a note at the foot of this page.\*

HULL, *October 13th, 1809.*

Rev. and dear Sir,

I have for some time felt a strong desire to address a few inquiries to you upon some of the subjects introduced in your late "Essay;" and the request you were so kind as to communicate to me, through the medium of our mutual friend, Mr. Bowden, has induced me to do it without further delay. If I shall

\* I knew nothing of this correspondence, nor of the circumstances which led to it, until a letter reached me from the gentleman who succeeded Mr. Payne at Hull. I had written to him to inquire about another matter; and in his reply he mentions it, and

state anything by way of objection to the sentiments of the "Essay." I rely on Dr. Williams's candour to acquit me of improper love of religious discussion, and to impute it to what, if I know my own heart, is its real cause, a desire to be informed where I am ignorant, and corrected where I have erred. What I have now to state refers, particularly, to the chapter on Grace. That part which relates to the entrance of "Moral Evil," I have read; and it did, I confess, strike me forcibly, that if the principles there laid down were admitted, they would indeed account for the fact of its entrance, but at the expense of human culpability. I ought, however, to add, that I have not thought upon it with that degree of closeness which quite justifies me, to myself, for hazarding an objection which future examination might remove. I proceed, therefore, at once to make a few remarks upon Chapter iv.; Section 5. You give three definitions of the term "grace," with the two former of which I fully accord. The third I am not sure that I fully understand, but I beg your reply to the following inquiries.

*First.*—By the term "subjective grace," do you intend some effect produced upon the mind, or that *Divine influence* which is employed in its production? I cannot but think that, through the whole of this section, you have reasoned as though *energy* or *influence*, and the effect of it, were convertible terms. "Under the term grace," you say, p. 395, "the sacred oracles intend the *holy state* of the mind, by which, in conjunction, &c., &c. When the psalmist says,

says,—"I often heard Mr. Lambert refer to it as being, I think, very much promoted by him, and some of the deacons. I once read this correspondence, but I do not know where a copy is now to be found. It related to some important points in Theology—more especially 'Faith' and 'Divine Influence,'—and I cannot but think Dr. Payne's views on those points received considerable modification from that correspondence. I recollect the impression at Hull was, that before that time, he had a strong leaning to Sandemanianism." On receiving this information, I applied to the reverend gentleman who, after Mr. Lambert's death, became his successor in the pastorate; and he, in his answer to my letter, says that he "can corroborate the statement given to me respecting Dr. Payne's reputed views when he was in Hull;" but that he can impart no accurate account of them, never having seen the correspondence in question; and that if it be still in existence, it is in the possession of a near relative of Dr. Williams's, to whom he refers me. I wrote immediately to this lady, who very politely sent me the letters, with permission to use them; and I avail myself of this liberty, in vindication of the memory of my revered friend. I remember his exposure of the gross errors of Sandemanianism, and the strong terms he employs in its condemnation, in the pamphlet which he published in 1820, a notice of which appears in these pages. Grieved indeed should I be to find that, during any part of his ministerial life, he indulged sentiments which could be fairly interpreted as indicating a "strong leaning to Sandemanianism." And whatever opinions might have been entertained by persons at Hull, who communicated, to the respected gentlemen above referred to, the impressions which they have conveyed to me, I do not think the correspondence, or rather Mr. Payne's own letter, (for that is the document which should be allowed to decide the question,) will justify the representation. Sandemanianism, properly so called, he abhorred in his later life; nor do I imagine that he was at all enamoured of it in his early days. That he sometimes entered into metaphysical discussions, and made metaphysical distinctions, and even manifested a leaning towards some views of truth which, possibly, a Sandemanian might also entertain, I readily admit; but that he was, what is generally understood by the term, a Sandemanian, or that he had any "strong" or special bias towards the errors of Sandemanianism, is what I, for one, am very slow to believe. His letter will bear me out in these remarks; and for this reason I publish it, *verbatim et literatim*, without the slightest abridgment.

‘The Lord will give grace and glory,’ it is expressive of a *gracious nature*, or a *holy principle*, and not merely some exhibited favour.” To the same effect, you add, at p. 398, “Its nature is distinguishable from every other sense of the term, in that it is the *immediate effect* of sovereign will in the soul.” Again, p. 409, “It is properly denominated a *Divine nature*, and is the *immediate effect* of sovereign, gracious energy.” And yet, in p. 399, you express yourself thus,—“The other cause (*i.e.* subjective grace), consisting in the Holy Spirit’s *immediate energy*.” Is then, it may be asked, the Holy Spirit’s *immediate energy*, and the *immediate effect* of sovereign, gracious energy, one and the same thing? I suppose you will not maintain this; but how, otherwise, do you reconcile these passages? The following page also affords an instance in which *energy*, and its immediate effect, a new nature, (two very distinct things as, I should think, you will readily allow,) at least appear to be confounded with each other. “Its most proper denomination is a physical cause; a term used by many divines to convey the idea of *immediate influence* on the mind. But it should be recollected that physical, in this connection, denotes *positive energy*, producing its effect without the intervention and will of the agent. It is not an object of choice, but a *NEW NATURE*, influencing the choice with respect to its proper objects,” &c., &c. Do the words *influence*, *energy*, and a *new nature* denote the same thing?

After your first explanation of subjective grace, viz. a “holy state of the mind,” you produce a number of passages in support of it. I suggest to your consideration the following inquiry, whether they are not all more naturally explained by substituting either the word favour instead of grace, or by considering it expressive of that gracious energy or influence upon which believers are daily dependent. Let us examine a few. “Who, when he was come, helped them much who had believed through grace;” *i.e.*, as I suppose, either through the favour of God, or that influence or energy which results from his favour. According to your sentiments, the phrase, “believed through grace,” means through a holy state of mind, or a gracious principle implanted in them. “He said, My grace is sufficient for thee.” How can the term, in this passage, mean “a holy state of mind?” for that is not the grace of Christ, but of the individual who possesses it. Is it not the evident import of the words, that Divine or gracious influence would be sufficient for Paul?

*Secondly.*—If by “subjective grace” you mean some effect produced upon the mind, by the Holy Spirit, I should be obliged by your stating its precise nature, and wherein it consists. As it is previous, and in order to the influence of the truth, it is not an effect produced upon the understanding, the will, or the affections; for, if I understand you, the truth is, confessedly, the instrument employed in influencing these powers. It is some effect produced upon the mind, or some new quality imparted to it, while in a state of unbelief; and, consequently, while it is as blind and stupid, while it is possessed of as much enmity against the character of God, and of as much love to sin, as the mind of an unconverted character! What is it then, and upon what power of the mind is it produced? Have you not sometimes, in common with Mr. Fuller,

explained it by terms which denote effects, evidently and confessedly, attributable to the truth? Thus you call it "a holy state of the mind." But is not a holy state of the mind a state in which the affections and desires are directed to holy objects? and is not this effected by the instrumentality of Divine truth? Again, you denominate it "a gracious nature." But, is not the word nature synonymous with disposition? and does not a gracious or Divine nature mean a holy nature or disposition, a nature conformed to the nature of God? And is this effected previous to the influence of Divine truth? At another time, you call it "the light of God in the soul." \* This expression, I confess, I cannot understand. Light is an emblem of knowledge. You cannot, however, mean knowledge, because you allow that all spiritual perception (*i.e.*, as I suppose, spiritual knowledge,) is by means of the word of truth. Light is also an emblem of purity. I suppose, however, you cannot mean purity, because you allow that pure or holy affections flow from the influence of the truth. You scarcely would have used such an expression to denote that Divine influence which we are all agreed is necessary to spiritual perception; and yet, without such a supposition, I cannot attach any definite meaning to the phrase, "the light of God in the soul."

*Thirdly.*—I should be obliged to you to state how, according to your principles, the work of sanctification can be ascribed to the Spirit of God. To me it appears that the gospel, or the truth, is the instrument, in the hands of this Divine Agent, of regenerating and sanctifying the soul. When it is unaccompanied with his gracious influence, (like second causes in the natural world, which, I suppose, it will be allowed possess no real efficiency,) it is unable to produce either of these effects; but it is "mighty, through God," to accomplish both. And, as it strikes me, *that Divine influence* which renders it efficacious is exerted in precisely the same manner in both cases. I understand you, however, to deny that men are born again by the gospel. You seem to think it absurd to imagine that any additional force should be imparted to the word; and therefore, as the word does not possess positive efficiency, you conclude that regeneration, or the first effect of the Spirit of God upon the mind, is without the word. But if the supposition, that the Holy Spirit adds additional force to the word, involve an absurdity, you must deny it, I should think, in sanctification, as well as in regeneration; and then, as you allow that sanctification is effected by the word, it will follow that it must be carried on by the word exclusively, that the Holy Spirit has nothing whatever to do in its production. How does this sentiment accord with 1 Thess. v. 23? You will reply, perhaps, that it is the office of the Holy Spirit to keep alive that holy principle which was imparted in regeneration, and, it may be, to invigorate it. But, granting that your system supports you in here introducing Divine agency, I cannot, with my present views, conceive that this amounts to the scriptural idea of sanctification, nor indeed to your own account of it. It may be allowed to be preparatory to it; but it is not the thing itself. If I have not mistaken your meaning, and Mr. Hawksley assured me I had not, you suppose that the Holy Spirit preserves, so to speak, an individual in a regenerated state, and that

the word is the sole agent in carrying on the work of sanctification. . I cannot conceive, therefore, how you can any more consistently maintain the influence of the Spirit in sanctification, than of the word in regeneration.

I have thus, Reverend Sir, remarked very freely upon this part of your Essay. Though it is ably, and, for the most part, luminously stated, I cannot, at least at present, embrace the sentiment for which you have so strongly pleaded. Yet I trust I am open to conviction; and if your engagements will allow you to favour me with a few remarks in reply, I shall esteem them a very great favour. I think I can see, that though the chapter on Grace does not, at first view, appear to be very essentially connected with what may be called the distinguishing doctrine of the Essay, yet a difference of opinion upon that subject would prevent a ready reception of the other.

With sincere wishes for your prolonged life, increasing usefulness, and comfort,

I remain,

Reverend and dear Sir,

Yours very respectfully,

G. PAYNE.

This letter may be regarded, I apprehend, as a fair specimen of the pains taken by the young divine to investigate every important subject in which he felt interested, and to arrive at clear and definite apprehensions; not being willing now, as he never was through life, to admit any moral or theological teaching which he did not perceive to be in harmony with the word of God. He states his case candidly and respectfully, and asks for explanations. Nor can I see anything in the letter to warrant the suspicion adverted to in a preceding note, that he had at this time a "strong leaning to Sandemanianism." The opening paragraph, referring to the introduction of "moral evil," discovers that he had taken but a cursory survey of this part of Dr. Williams's work, and held the subject in reserve for future consideration: nor does this point bear any relation to the imputation which I am endeavouring to repel; it therefore calls for no further observation. The first section of the letter is exhausted in an attempt to ascertain the correct meaning, and suitable distinction, and application of terms. The second part is much of the same character, with the addition of some remarks, which seem to show that he viewed the influence of the Spirit and the influence of the truth as concurrent; which, indeed, they are, in order of time,—though, in order of nature, the former precedes the latter. In the last portion of the letter, the same

strain of remark is applied to the work of sanctification. He shows his entire belief in the scriptural doctrine, that both regeneration and sanctification are wrought by the Spirit through the instrumentality of the truth; and his only anxiety is to ascertain *how* this is done, on the principles laid down by Dr. Williams; or rather on *his* understanding of those principles.

How it was possible for a suspicion to be engendered, of a "strong" leaning to the errors of Sandeman and his followers, by the views expressed in this letter, I cannot comprehend; nor could I have given credence to the statement, if I had not received it on the authority (which has been already adduced) of gentlemen who must have known what was reported. It is, however, one of those occurrences which we must be content to leave among the unaccountable things which too frequently happen in this fallen world; where, alas! we find persons so ready to circulate their own interpretations of other men's opinions, and to impute to their neighbours sentiments which they, if appealed to, would instantly disown.

The reply of Dr. Williams to Mr. Payne is written with great urbanity, and in its calligraphic arrangements and execution affords evidence that the worthy Doctor was a person of great neatness and order. It is a valuable document, and is penned with as much clearness and accuracy as distinguished the second edition of *his* celebrated Essay, in the preparation of which he employed a more carefully-selected phraseology—one less liable to lead to animadversion from metaphysicians like Mr. Payne, who, as Dr. Wardlaw says, "loved a little bit of an argument." \*

I may add that, in Dr. Williams's principles, and in *his* statements also, as they appear in this reply, and in the subsequent edition of his work, Mr. Payne generally concurred, as may be seen

Why it was that Mr. Payne did not retain this letter, which was clearly his own property, I do not know. Neither can I tell how it happened that *his* letter to Dr. Williams should have been surrendered by that gentleman to other hands. Probably Mr. Lambert, who regarded Mr. P. with much affection and confidence, might have possessed himself of both, in order to use them, in his intercourse with judicious persons, as the best defence of his youthful colleague from the injurious effects of unworthy surmises and unjust imputations. I am thankful, however, that I have been enabled to bring them to light, and, by their employment, satisfactorily, I hope, to vindicate my departed friend.

on consulting his letter to Dr. Wardlaw, p. elxvii.,—the pamphlet referred to, p. 53, — and especially his volume on “Divine Sovereignty,” &c.; and his “Congregational Lecture on Original Sin.”

Dr. Williams’s letter will now follow.

ROTTERHAM, Oct. 16, 1800.

My dear Sir,

I thank you for your free remarks on some parts of my Essay, and for the opportunity of answering your inquiries. But before I proceed to these replies, allow me to notice your observation on “the entrance of moral evil.” You acknowledge that you have not thought of it with that closeness which might justify your objection. This indeed is a candid, but also a needed apology. For, “to justify” an inference that my principles “affect human culpability,” or, which is the same thing, that man is not *criminal*, *because* the origin of moral evil is in *himself* exclusively, is out of the power of reason. If sin originated in *any other* way, beside what I have stated, for man to be accountable *at all* would be strange indeed. That is, it would originate ultimately in God, the author of our created nature, (supposing a denial of a negative principle by which that created nature is capable of being perverted,) and yet must be punished as if it were not from him! It would be to *hate* and *punish* the fruit of his own appointment! Is there any conceivable *active power* but from God? And if there were *no other* origin of sin, it must plainly be God’s offspring! In short, the more my principles are *examined* and understood, the more clearly it must appear (as I am constrained to think) that they are demonstrably founded in the eternal nature of things, and that no adverse principles are *compatible with a moral system*.

*First*.—You inquire whether, by the term “subjective grace,” I mean some *effect* produced upon the mind, or that *Divine influence* which is employed in its production? I know not how to make my meaning plainer than by the definition given, p. 398,—“It is the *immediate effect* of sovereign will in the soul.” I do not suppose that *influence*, and the *effect* of it, are convertible terms. Yet the *same thing* may be expressed by either of them, under different relations. As proceeding from God, it is *influence* or energy; but as existing in the mind, it is an *effect*, a nature, a quality, &c. Thus a ray of light proceeding from the sun is an *influence*, but as existing in the eye, or a transparent body, it is an *effect*. Had you attended to this necessary distinction, probably all embarrassment about such terms would have been prevented. The “subjective grace” for which I plead, as proceeding from God, is a sovereign gracious energy; but its existence in the soul is the immediate effect. And this is properly called a *holy state* of the mind, because from it alone *proceed* holy thoughts, affections, and actions. It is “a new heart,” or a “right spirit,” as the fountain of all acceptable *exercises*. When, in p. 399, I state thus,—“The other *cause*, consisting in the Holy Spirit’s *immediate energy*,”—it is obvious that “immediate energy” is the *cause* of that *effect*, which I have

defined as "subjective grace." It is therefore a mistake in you to identify *cause* and *subjective* grace, in the manner you have done, as if it were the true import of my language. You suggest the substitution of the word "favour" for "grace," in some texts produced; but this question would still return, what *kind of favour* is intended? But you also suggest the propriety of considering the term *favour* as "expressive of that gracious energy or influence upon which believers are daily dependent." Is not this the very thing for which I plead? Subjective grace as coming from God (like light from the sun, or a stream from a fountain,) is "a gracious energy or influence;" and upon this "believers are daily dependent," as a reservoir is dependent on a spring, or an enlightened body (as the moon) on the light of the sun. You ask, how can the term "grace" in this passage, "My grace is sufficient for thee," mean a *holy state of mind*? And you object, that this is not the grace of *Christ*, but of the individual who possesses it. But surely that grace which is from *Christ*, as its fountain, may properly be called *his* grace. He is full of grace; and out of his fulness we receive grace. "My grace," that which I have to impart, and of which thou shalt be possessed, "is sufficient for thee." If this promised grace was not to be *possessed* as a principle in the soul, how could it be *sufficient*? An energy or influence from *Christ*, without any *effect* answerable to what I have termed *subjective grace*, is an idea which I apprehend has no archetype.

*Secondly.*—You inquire, "If this be an *effect* upon the mind, what is its precise *nature*, and wherein it consists?" I think this is done already in the Essay, and implied in what has been now stated. But I will endeavour to explain it by other terms and illustrations. It is "the life of God in the soul of man," as BURNET and SCOUGAL express it. Or, it is the immediate effect of the Spirit of Christ in the soul, as the source of all spiritual exercises, whether of the understanding, will, or affections. As fallen man has a *sinful nature* previous to the *sinful actions* of his life, from whence these proceed, and from which objective temptations have success; so a man savingly renewed has a *gracious nature* previous to any *gracious acts*. It is that immediate effect of Divine influence, or the Holy Spirit, in the soul, which enables it to understand the truth, to believe, to love, to fear, to obey, &c.; and without which these things could never follow. However difficult it may be to make another understand what we mean precisely even by *animal life*, we are sufficiently convinced of its existence from its effects, and we also know whence it comes. So, in the other case, the vivifying influence *finds* the soul in a state of unbelief, but does not leave it there. It finds the sinner blind and stupid, at enmity with God, and in love with sin; or, an unconverted character; but makes him willing in the day of God's power. It enlightens, quickens, and renovates the mind; it slays the enmity, and enables the man to understand the Scriptures, to know God and Jesus Christ, to love the Lord, and to tremble at his word. You ask, "Upon what power of the mind is it produced?" I answer, on *every* power. We might as well ask, on what member of the body is animal life produced? Natural life, indeed, is coeval with our members; and so was the spiritual life coeval with the human faculties: but by sin a spiritual death took place; and



the lost life is restored by an immediate act of sovereign favour, in order to render any means (as Divine truth, &c.) efficacious and saving.

You ask, "Have you not explained it by *terms* which denote effects attributable to the influence of *the truth*?" Certainly; otherwise what need would there be to distinguish the *different acceptations* of the term GRACE? Do we not constantly, on every subject, do the same, through the poverty of language? The only remedy is, to observe the connection, the nature of the subject, causes, effects, and circumstances. Without this, language would be enormously unwieldy. The influence of truth is *grace*; and so is the immediate influence of the *Spirit*; and also the effects of that influence, but in a different sense. You again ask, "Is not a *holy state of the mind* a state in which the affections and desires are directed to holy objects?" Granted; but what then? What right has this phrase to claim that meaning *exclusively*, any more than the phrase *the grace of God*, which all allow has different significations in different connections? The same remark is applicable to the phrase *a gracious nature*, and the others which you mention. You say, that by *light* is meant *knowledge*; but is this the only import of the term? Certainly not. Light is a *medium* of knowledge, or perception of an object, even more properly than their perception itself, though they may in some connections be used synonymously. Truth is the *thing known*, and by the medium of *light* we come or are enabled to know it. You seem to identify *purity* and *holy affections*, as if there were *no other* import of the term *purity* used in a spiritual sense. But this is begging the question, and is not true. Were there *no purity of nature* antecedent to holy affections, it is clearly impossible that there should be any holy affections at all. For the operation of truth, whether law or gospel, on an unholy mind, only excites enmity, lust, unbelief, and rebellion. And the *more clearly* truth is displayed, the greater will be the *opposition* to it. The mud at the bottom of the well is stirred up by it.

You seem to imagine that there is some Divine influence, energy, or operation from God upon the soul, which does not *dwell* in it as a *new nature*, but is transient and evanescent. But that notion appears to me inconsistent with all just views of theological science, of Scripture testimony, and of Christian experience. The Holy Spirit in the soul, we are assured, is "a well of living water." Our being *able* to behold the glory of the Lord, as it shines in the person and work of Christ, is "by the Spirit of the Lord." You ask, "Is not a *holy state of the mind* a state in which the affections and desires are directed towards holy objects? and is not this effected by the instrumentality of Divine truth?" Here you identify two things that are very distinct, viz. subjective and reflected grace; and the latter of these you call "a *holy state of the mind*." This is to dispute about *words*; whether affections and desires directed towards holy objects, by means of Divine truth, may not be termed "a *holy state of the mind*?" You are, undoubtedly, at liberty to denominate the things explained by such terms, though in my view the phrase is not strictly appropriate. But the question returns in full force,—Is that the *only* thing which may be so expressed? Is there *no holy state of the mind* PREVIOUS to its being affected

by the word? Is there not "a good and honest heart," rendered such by the Holy Spirit, into which the seed of Divine truth is cast? Surely, it is not the seed that makes the soil good, nor the power with which it is endowed.

\*The notion I have thought it my duty to oppose is, I firmly believe, unscriptural. It is also fundamentally unphilosophical. It confounds *physics* and *morals*; in other words, it reduces Divine influence to the order of *objective means*, as much so as Divine truth; or else to the mere laws of providential operation. If it be neither of these, nor yet that for which I contend, I am apprehensive it will be found no Divine influence, but a *mystical nothing*. You speak of a "Divine influence which we are all agreed is necessary to spiritual perception." You will much oblige me, by explaining the *nature* and *manner* of such influence as you suppose to be necessary *with the word*, in order to render it effectual. To what may it be compared? How may it be illustrated? Is there anything like it, or that bears any analogy to it, without identifying morals and mechanics? When wind or water turns a mill, there is a Divine energy giving force to the laws of matter and motion. But surely this can never be that operation of the Holy Spirit with the word of which the Sacred Scriptures speak. To recur to the nature of the *soul*, and of the *objects* to which it is made to attach itself, contributes nothing towards solving the difficulty.

Scripture and experience abundantly prove that no *objective* clearness of truth, of teaching, of miracles,—no impressive or forcible representations of God, of Christ, or of heavenly or infernal realities, connected with the *common laws* of Divine energy, as in physical nature, produce a good moral effect. The clearer and plainer the representation of Divine truth, the more is the enmity of the natural man roused. Thus, the brighter the Sun of righteousness shines in the word, the more is the *natural* perception *offended*. The history of Christ and his apostles fully proves this. Were it not for "subjective grace," as before explained, every soul of man would hate and oppose both law and gospel; and the opposition would be in proportion to the *plainness* of the *discovery objectively* made. Were the *influence*, on the contrary, only in the *objective truth* of the gospel, a good preacher might calculate upon the *same effects* upon all his adult audience, with a kind of certainty equal to that which a good engineer expects from a well-constructed machine.

I repeat the inquiry, and I hope you will indulge me with an answer,—*What is that Divine influence which is supposed to accompany the word, if different from what I have stated?* But,

*Thirdly.*—You wish to know how, according to my principles, the "work of sanctification can be ascribed to the Spirit of God?" To you, no doubt, there has appeared some difficulty; but to me it is so evident, that I cannot conceive how possibly the work of sanctification can be ascribed to the Spirit of God on *any other principle*, without identifying his operations in that work with the Divine energy in the laws of nature. However, to prevent mistakes, if possible, we should settle what we mean by "the work of sanctification." By sanctification, I understand *being made holy*. But "holy" again is applicable to dif-

ferent things. Beside the mere relative sense of the word, as when we say the "holy land," &c., we say a "holy nature"—"holy desires"—"holy designs," and "holy affections." The nature, designs, and operations of God are *holy*; and so are those of angels. They were never otherwise; but our nature is depraved and unholy, and entirely so, before a heavenly birth, and consequently all our desires, designs, and affections. Holy *affections* are generated by contemplations of Divine realities; holy designs are formed by a just discrimination of *ends* and *means*; and a holy nature is generated by the Holy Spirit operating directly and immediately in the way of a new creation, a new life, or a new birth. "So is every one that is born of the Spirit." By a *perception* and approbation of revealed *truth*, a saving *revolution* in the soul takes place, as to *knowledge, faith, love, hope, &c.*, which may be called "the new man" in Christ Jesus. This change, in a more lax acceptation, may be termed "a new birth." Thus Christians are "begotten again by the word of truth," &c. But to suppose that the word of truth, or these holy exercises, or both, really produce a holy nature, cannot be true. It is subversive of all rational ideas, to make the *operations* of the soul to change its *nature*. If the nature of the tree be not good, the fruit cannot possibly *make* it good. If the *nature* of the soul be the subject of supernatural and immediate Divine influence, its faith, and love, and hope, and joy, by means of Divine *truth*, (without any supposed supernatural concurrence of Divine influence *in* or incorporated *with* the word,) *will be holy*.

If by *sanctification* we mean a growing conformity to Christ in holy *exercises of mind*; the office of Divine influence is to maintain and strengthen our *spiritual nature*, from whence those exercises proceed, and without which no such effects would follow, however excellent or glorious might be the objective *means*. The success of these last depends upon the *use* we make of them; and that which *ensures* the profitable use of means is Divine influence *in* the soul. But how is it possible for *truth* (without subjective influence) to *ensure* the profitable *use* of truth? And to suppose the *power* of sanctifying is *in* the word, as something superadded to, or blended with it, as weight *with* or *in* a body, does not mend the matter. For the soul would still want a *new nature*, by which it is enabled to perceive, approve, believe, love, and in a word rightly to *use* the revealed truth. As the stream does not alter the nature of its *fountain*; so the exercises of the *soul* upon the word of truth, or any sanctification which arises thence, do not, nor possibly can in the nature of things, alter the *nature* of the soul, or produce the *principle* of holy acts.

The system I oppose, instead of *simplifying* the Divine economy, involves it, I conceive, in the most dangerous kind of mysticism. The words "Divine influence" are admitted; but the *thing* is denied as to any conceivable *use*. For of what use can "Divine influence" be in sanctification, according to that system? A *renewed nature* will, according to the fixed laws of mental operations, receive, approve, and rejoice in the truth. And an *unrenewed nature* will eternally remain so, if Divine influence be nothing more than objective, *in* or *with* the word. We may as well expect to "gather grapes from thorns, or

figs from thistles." Divine agency, operating *in* or *with* "second causes," produces effects *uniformly*. A mechanical power raises *weight* irrespective of the nature of the subject, whether hay or wood, stone or lead. The wind drives a ship without respect to the nature of the sail, whether hemp or silk. But we know that Divine influence, in its manner of operating in "second causes," produces effects in no such proportion on the minds of men, as constant fact proves. A number of human souls listen to the truths of the gospel; but all are not influenced alike,—to some the same things, the same precious doctrines, are foolishness, and "a savour of death unto death." But if Divine truth and influence operated on the soul in the manner of "second causes," *exclusively*, that is without "subjective grace," this could not take place: the effects, conversion and sanctification, would be seen either in all alike, or in none; except we resolve all cases into mere physical associations!

If it be said, the effect is produced when the truth is *believed*; very true, let there be but the *spirit of faith* in exercise, and the difference is accounted for. But *all* the difficulty of accounting for the soul's *possessing* that spirit, or principle of faith, remains untouched on the system I oppose. To expect the *principle* or spirit of faith, by which we are enabled to believe the truth, from the truth itself accompanied with Divine influence, as operating in physical "second causes," would be no less absurd than for a *blind* man to expect distinct vision from *light*, or a *deaf* person to expect pleasure from musical *sounds*.

Yet we consistently maintain that the *inability* of the carnal mind to receive the things of the Spirit of God is a *criminal* inability; because the mind is wilfully and resolutely attached to *other things* which are *incompatible* with Divine truth. A belief of falsehood excludes the belief of the truth, and the love of the world excludes the love of the Father. The gospel is the *grand test* to try of *what nature* the soul is, whether good or bad, carnal or spiritual. "It is also the great *instrument*, divinely appointed, as a *moral mean*, to awaken, convince, convert, and sanctify the soul. The *rationale* of this deserves to be noticed. The rational soul in its free agency being determined by *motives*, (understanding by this term that which eventually *moves* the soul to *actual* determination,) and such motives consisting of *objective considerations*, (which is the proper notion of *moral means*,) together with the *nature* of the soul as carnal or spiritual; it is plain, that neither conversion nor sanctification could possibly take place (as exercises of the mind) without the instituted *means*. For though the Spirit of God needs not the instrumentality of the word for infusing life into the soul, whereby it is enabled to *receive* the truth in the love thereof, its instrumentality is indispensably necessary for *us*, in order that we may *believe and love it*. For *faith*, or *believing*, cometh by hearing the word of God. And the same is true of every *exercised* or *reflected* grace.

You suppose I "deny that men are born again of the gospel." But this is by no means the fact. On the contrary, I believe, and have endeavoured uniformly to maintain, that the *new man* in Christ Jesus, consisting of knowledge, faith, love, fear, delight in God, &c., is "born again of the gospel." Nor does

it appear to me possible for a man, in *that sense*, (according to several passages of Scripture,) to be born again otherwise than by the word of truth. But this is a very different thing from that *new nature* which renders the word *effectual*, in order to produce that new birth, and to promote sanctification. When the apostle says, "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us,"—what less can be intended than this, that the Holy Spirit given unto us *in the heart*, or soul, is the *cause* why we perceive and enjoy the love of God towards us in the gospel, and exercise love towards him in return? The same is true respecting every part and degree of sanctification. The Holy Spirit *in the soul* is the subjective *cause*; but the word of truth *alone* is the *objective means*. But Divine concurrence, as in "second causes," is not *peculiar* to the operation of *truth* any more than of *error*. Without such Divine concurrence, according to the laws of our nature, we could not even believe a falsehood; which shows how improper it is to identify it with the Scripture meaning of Divine influence.

Had I time, I would endeavour to transcribe the preceding pages, and render them less unworthy of your serious and close consideration. If any expression has escaped me which has a tendency to offend, do not impute it to want of Christian affection; and believe me,

Dear Sir,

Your sincere Friend and Brother,

E. WILLIAMS.

The discussion, to which the reader's attention has been directed, having terminated, Mr. Payne continued to exercise his ministry, as he had done previously, greatly to the satisfaction of the venerated father in the gospel, Mr. Lambert; and with growing acceptance among the people.

Early in the year 1812 he published a discourse, entitled "Britain's Danger and Security; or the Conduct of Jehoshaphat considered, and recommended: a Sermon preached at the Chapel in Fish Street, Kingston-upon-Hull, February 5th, 1812." Of this production of his pen I can give no further account, having never seen it. I have searched among his pamphlets and papers for a copy, and have also written and applied to a number of his friends, but have been unable to procure one. Several of his manuscript sermons, preached at this period, are however before me; and most of these are characterized by considerable vigour of thought, comprehensiveness, severe accuracy, and apt illustration. Taking these as samples of his ordinary preparations for the pulpit, at this time, they evince much care and labour, manifest a constant endeavour to present God's truth in an impressive and useful form,

and show that his pulpit ministrations must have been instructive and edifying.

But a new and more extended field of labour now presented itself to his notice, and demanded his services. During his attendance at Glasgow University, he was occupied, occasionally, in preaching engagements in the city and neighbourhood, and sometimes went for this purpose to Edinburgh. On one of these visits he was accompanied by his beloved friend and fellow-student, Joseph Fletcher, whose biographer thus refers to the circumstance. "He went to Edinburgh, with Mr. Payne, in the month of February, 1807, in consequence of an invitation from the well-known Robert Haldane, at whose house they both stayed. 'Each of us,' (says Mr. F. in a letter,) 'preached twice on the Sabbath, at Mr. Haldane's and Mr. Aikman's. Mr. Haldane's holds three thousand people, and Mr. Aikman's fifteen hundred. Both were well attended, and I preached with much less difficulty than I expected.' " \*

These excursions to the metropolis of Scotland, and pulpit engagements there, introduced him to the notice of many Christian people belonging to the congregations he addressed, and made them, in some degree, acquainted with his talents and capabilities as a minister of the gospel; and, ultimately, opened the way for his being invited to undertake the duties of the pastoral office, in that city. An extract from the records of the Christian society which gave him the invitation will show how the church originated, and define the period when he took the oversight of it, in the name of his Master and Lord.

"In March, 1808, Mr. James Haldane renounced infant baptism, and altered his views regarding various parts of the mode of worship followed by the church. Those members of the church (assembling in the Tabernacle), who differed with Mr. Haldane in their views on these subjects, held, generally, the sentiments entertained by the church originally formed in 1798, but not having any legal right to the Tabernacle, and not seeing it their duty to forbear with their pastor, and those who held his altered views, agreed to separate. Accordingly, about one hundred of the members retired, and met for worship, the 26th of March, 1808, in

\* Life of Rev. Joseph Fletcher, D.D., p. 74.

Bernard's Rooms, Thistle Street. The church, in the summer of the same year, chose Mr. William Innes, of Dundee, to be their pastor. After his secession, with about forty individuals, the church was supplied by various ministers from England, 'till 1812, when they called Mr. George Payne, then of Hull."

The invitation of this infant Christian community he decided to accept; and, consequently, terminated his engagement with the church at Hull, June 14th, 1812; having laboured there, with much acceptance and success, about four years. Throughout this period, harmony, cordiality, and mutual esteem subsisted between him and Mr. Lambert. The venerated pastor looked upon his assistant with tender solicitude, and the younger minister revered the elder with undeviating constancy. Their connexion, while it lasted, was a source of satisfaction to both; and when it ended, an occasion of regret. These remarks are sustained by the following testimony, which appears in a Memoir of Mr. Lambert, in the *Congregational Magazine* for 1820. "Though this gentleman (Mr. P.) remained at Hull but a few years, Mr. Lambert entertained a strong affection for him, and could hardly have felt more, at the time of their separation, had he been his own son."

## SECTION IV.

### PASTOR AT EDINBURGH.

HAVING closed his engagements at Hull, he removed immediately, with his family, to Edinburgh, and entered at once upon his holy and beloved employment. A few weeks afterward, on the second day of July, 1812, he was publicly recognised as the scripturally-appointed bishop of the church whose call he had accepted, and was set apart to the duties of his office by the solemn and appropriate ceremony of Ordination.

From the course of preparation through which he had so creditably passed, at Hoxton and Glasgow, viewed in combination with the experience he had gained in ministerial occupations at Leeds and Hull, it will be readily admitted that he was now eminently qualified for the laborious and acceptable prosecution of the

work to which, in the metropolis of Scotland, he was henceforth, at least for many years, to be devoted. And all the capabilities he possessed were demanded by the circumstances in which he was now placed, and were sacredly consecrated to the service of God in the Gospel of his Son.

There were some things in his new position not of the most encouraging character. The place of worship was only a hired room, which, though commodious, was nevertheless on many accounts objectionable, especially in such a city as Edinburgh. The church, too, had been created by the secession of a minority from a much more numerous community; and its original number had been somewhat reduced by the retirement of several, together with their first pastor. True, their separation from Mr. Haldane and his friends was honourable to themselves, and they held theological views and opinions quite in accordance with those of their newly-elected minister. Still, he could not disguise from himself that his post was necessarily one of some difficulty; and that to keep his standing, and to advance to a condition of prosperity, would involve a large share of self-denying toil. But for this he was prepared. God had given him the hearts of the people. Their invitation was earnest, cordial, unanimous. They had pledged themselves to hold up his hands; and he stood ready, in confident reliance on the Divine blessing, to labour for that edification and increase,—in all simplicity, sincerity, and faithfulness. With determinate ardour, he gave himself to the things pertaining to his ministry, and humbly looked to the source of all spiritual supply to render fruitful his well-directed efforts. Nor did he labour and pray in vain.

In addition to constant preaching and pastoral visitation of the sick, and such as needed special sympathy and judicious counsel, he brought under training, in Bible classes held on the Sabbath evening, a large number of young people of both sexes. To their intellectual and moral improvement he devoted also several evenings of the week; and by his assiduity, gentleness, and affection, he gained their esteem, and secured their attention to his persevering endeavours to promote their benefit. Many of these young persons became decided and consistent Christians; and from his classes, and other sources, the church obtained



constant accessions, and the congregation was greatly augmented. \*

Thus matters encouragingly progressed, for some three or four years, until it became necessary to seek a larger place of worship. At length it was determined to erect a new edifice; and shortly after, a chapel was built in Albany Street, capable of holding twelve hundred persons, and at a cost of £4500. After gathering the contributions of his own people, and those of other friends in Edinburgh, towards this erection, he came to London to obtain further aid; and, on this occasion, endeavoured to promote an extension of intercourse between the Independents of Scotland and their brethren in the South, by an interchange of ministerial visits. The chapel was opened for Divine worship on the 2nd of May, 1817, by the late Rev. Greville Ewing of Glasgow; and within the walls of this monument to his zeal and success Mr. Payne continued, till his removal to Blackburn, in 1823, to dispense the word of life to a numerous and deeply-attached flock, the nucleus of which he found in an upper room when he entered upon his labours, but the bulk of which was gathered and trained for the service of God on earth, and in heaven, by his own instrumentality.

But, besides preaching the word, and overseeing the church, Mr. Payne gave other proofs of earnest toil and devoted diligence, in those efforts of his pen by which he sought to correct error, and to advance the interests of truth. For several years he held the office of Co-Editor, with Mr. Aikman, of the *Christian Herald*; a periodical which became the precursor of the present *Scottish Congregational Magazine*, and was finally merged in that publication. To the pages of the *Herald* he largely contributed, besides being occupied, as I am informed he was, in the principal superintendence of the work. Reviews of books, essays, and papers on various subjects, also proceeded from his pen, and made their appearance in different periodicals, both English and Scotch. Some of these I could point out as his productions, others I am unable to distinguish; but did I know them all, I should content myself with a bare enumeration, as my limited space would not allow me to discuss their separate merits. There is, however, *one* on which—not on account

\* Dr. Wardlaw's *Reminiscences*, pp. cxxxix., cxi.

of anything contained in the paper itself, but because of certain circumstances connected with it, which reflect honour on my departed friend—I must bestow a passing notice.

It is well known to many that Mr. Payne was the writer of a critique on a sermon, preached and printed by the late Dr. Hamilton, on occasion of the execution of a gentleman at Leeds for forgery, which appeared in 1815 in the pages of the *Eclectic Review*. It is also more generally known that, though that critique was far less severe than several others published in the various periodicals of the day, it was the one which gave Mr. Hamilton most pain, as the *Eclectic* circulated freely among the denomination to which he belonged. Whether Mr. Payne's metaphysical cast of mind disqualified him for being a *fair* critic of the imaginative and youthful preacher is a point I do not pretend to determine. But I do know that he regarded the occasion on which the discourse was delivered, so large an assemblage being drawn together, as one when the simple truths of the gospel should have been pressed home upon the consciences of men; and his disappointment was great, and amounted to anguish of spirit, when he found, as he gathered from the printed sermon, that the momentous season had not been so improved. It was this chiefly which led to the condemnatory strain of his remarks; and as much as this is intimated in the review itself. I know also that his ignorance of Mr. Hamilton's real character—for at that time they had never met—had much to do with the severity of his strictures, as the following will show.

Some years had elapsed since the sermon was preached, and the review published, when Mr. Payne and Mr. Hamilton found themselves together in a party of friends,—chiefly ministers. The evening passed pleasantly;—interesting and brilliant conversation was entered into, extended, and kept up. Mr. H. was in one of his best and happiest moods; and my friend was charmed with his noble, open, generous, and withal religious bearing. Before the company separated, in a playful humour, he adverted to his “condemned sermon,” as he was wont to style it; and observed, “I have not the slightest conception who it was that wrote the article in the *Eclectic*,” and then, turning to Mr. P., said, “For ought I know, our brother Payne was the author of it.” My friend felt the em-

barrassment of his position, and feared the next sentence would be the question direct; but he was instantly relieved,—for Mr. H., in a subdued tone, added, “No man, however, who knew me could have so written respecting me.” “I immediately rejoined,” said my friend, “I believe it: the man who wrote it did not know you.” Then, with much emphasis, observed the good Doctor, to the brother minister and myself, to whom he was giving these details,—“Nor do I think I could have written that article, had I known Hamilton previously.”

Ah! no—the frank, true-hearted, generous, devout man, who could pen that touching preface to a sermon, published some years after, in which he adverts to his reviewers, and which is quoted in his biography by Dr. Stowell, was then unknown and unappreciated, and might have expected more merciful measure from the critics of his, confessedly, hasty production.

But the scenes of earth are passed away, and the limitations of temporal knowledge are annihilated for ever. The reviewer and the preacher are both gone to their rest. The former preceded the latter only a few short weeks, in their transit to the heavenly regions; and there, in that abode of holy love and divinest concord, neither the metaphysical abstractedness of the one, nor the exuberant imaginativeness of the other, prevents their seeing “eye to eye,” nor withholds them from a cordial and rapturous embrace, with esteem that shall never diminish, and affection that never shall die!

In January, 1816, Mr. Payne published a pamphlet of sixty pages, entitled—“An Exposition of Rom. vi. 6–24: designed to illustrate the doctrine of Divine Sovereignty.” It formed part of a series of lectures, which he had delivered to his congregation, on this important epistle; and had appeared in a succession of papers in the *Christian Herald*. At the request of several friends, he consented to send it forth in its present form. In the preface to this little work he says,—

“It has been the aim of the writer to state the doctrine of Scripture upon this important subject, divested of those false and disgusting appendages too frequently attached to it, and which he cannot but think have operated most powerfully in preventing its general reception. The practical influence of the doctrine, also, has not been overlooked. Any statement of this branch of the

Christian system which does not include its moral tendency must be extremely defective; since there is no part of the word of God more evidently calculated to promote humility, dependence upon God, gratitude for all his mercies, and, in short, to foster every grace of the Holy Spirit, than the doctrine of Divine Sovereignty, clearly understood and powerfully felt."

In this pamphlet may be found the germ of his Lectures on the same subject, first published in 1836. The statements it contains are characterized by his usual discrimination, accuracy, and profound deference to revealed truth; as well as his anxious care to render it productive of practical results. As a specimen of his public lecturing on the Scriptures, in early life, it is most valuable.

His next separate publication was sent from the press in 1820. The title is—"Remarks on the Moral Influence of the Gospel upon Believers; and on the scriptural manner of ascertaining our state before God: occasioned by Mr. Walker's Letters on Primitive Christianity:—to which are added, Observations on the radical error of the Glassite or Sandemanian System; and on the doctrine of Divine Influence." The pamphlet extends to ninety-eight pages, and consists, as may be gathered from the title, of four separate parts. The substance of what appears under the head of "Divine Influence" accords with the positions laid down in his letter to Dr. Wardlaw,\* and may be found, greatly amplified, in his "Lectures on Regeneration;" and in his reply to the statements of Dr. Jenkyn, in the appendix to those Lectures, published in the third edition of the work, in 1846. The book is, necessarily, for the most part, controversial, but is distinguished by great candour and fairness toward the parties opposed; though their opinions are subjected to the most searching scrutiny. In the advertisement he writes thus,—

"Sandemanianism is, in fact, Antinomianism under another name. It may be less gross and repulsive at first view, than that which usually bears this designation; it may be adapted for men of greater intellectual refinement, but still it is Antinomianism. At least, so it must be pronounced, if we adopt the rule of judgment laid down by our Lord,—'By their fruits ye shall know them.'—'A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit.' \* \* \* The subjects, however, on which the pamphlet treats are of universal interest, and of infinite importance. All Christians must be concerned to know what is the scriptural

\* Dr. Wardlaw's *Reminiscences*, pp. cxlvii., cxlviii.

manner of ascertaining their state before God ! If the writer has been so happy as to shed any portion of light upon this interesting question,—light which, while it establishes the hope of the real Christian, will chase away that of the ungodly,—he shall think himself amply repaid."

The clearness of view, close reasoning, and judicious employment of scriptural statement, which run through this little work, entitle it to the serious attention of all who would attain distinct apprehensions of the topics on which it treats, and show its author to have been a man of sound judgment, of a truly Christian temper, and one who was not only conscientiously deferential in his regard to holy Scripture, but also deeply versed in the word of God. It is, moreover, a satisfactory demonstration that, whatever might have been the views he took of the subjects expounded, when resident at Hull,—or which some thought he took of them,—the opinions he here exhibits and defends, with overwhelming force of argument, are in complete harmony with the oracles of inspired truth.

In 1821, I find he printed a little tractate, price 4d., the title of which was—"Mistakes concerning the Way of Salvation." Though I have made inquiries in all accessible quarters, both in England and Scotland, I regret to state I have been unable to procure a copy, and therefore can give no further account of it.

"The Instrumentality of Divine Truth, in the Sanctification of the Souls of Men," made its appearance in the early part of 1823. It consists of a "Discourse," founded on John xvii. 17, filling thirty-seven octavo pages, and was, most probably, preached to the people of the author's charge. It illustrates these two points:—"I. The importance of the blessing which formed the subject of the Saviour's petition on the occasion referred to. II. The means by which the enjoyment of it is secured to the people of God." On these topics there is a full amount of lucid statement, carefully arranged, and forcibly reasoned out, discovering the preacher's earnest desire to render the whole productive of personal conviction and practical advantage. A short extract will suffice to show this. I take it from the third division of the second head of discourse, which is thus defined,—"The importance of this blessing is evinced by the consideration, that it is necessary to render us extensively useful in the world." After referring to the sanctification of apostolic men,

and the influence of their holiness upon their usefulness, he adds,—

“Eminent personal religion is as necessary, in this point of view, in the present day, as it was in the times of the apostles. It will generally be found that the most *holy* man is the most *useful* man,—that the individual who has made the greatest progress in knowledge, and faith, and conformity to the image of God, all other circumstances being equal, will labour most effectively in promoting the extension of the Redeemer’s kingdom. Growing holiness precedes, and is essential to growing usefulness; which depends, perhaps in all cases, more particularly upon the qualities of the heart, than those of the head. A clear and perspicacious judgment, a bright and piercing intellect, an understanding capable of embracing almost every subject in its wide and capacious grasp, is a blessing of no ordinary magnitude; but a heart, purified from irregular, and debasing, and unholy desires,—a heart expanded by Divine truth, and glowing with the love of God,—a heart in which the altar of self-devotion has been overthrown, and the fire of holy consecration to God kindled, by the Spirit of Jehovah, is a blessing whose magnitude is still immensely superior. The light of intellect is far less valuable, and truly beautiful, than the light of moral purity; and it is only when the fires of the former are directed and governed by the latter, that they bring either good to man or glory to God.”

It is refreshing to the spirit, and truly satisfactory, to read such remarks as the foregoing from the pen of one who, at the time he wrote them, was about to be transferred to another sphere of laborious employment, where, if possible, their remembrance and influence would be of greater moment than in the position he now occupied. For nothing can be more important than that such sentiments should be impressed on the minds and hearts of young men devoted to intellectual culture, and the acquisition of knowledge, that both might be consecrated to the holy work of the Christian ministry; and to the training of such he was now about to give himself. Nor is the expression of such views, nor the matter of the whole sermon, of which the above extract is a sample, to be regarded as the formal exhibition of truth which he felt himself bound, professionally, to press upon the attention of others. All who knew the man will be prepared to admit that these were the unfeigned utterances of his own heart—the gushings forth of that “well of water” which lay deep in the secret recesses of his own soul; and that what he here taught was no other than what he himself had “tasted, and handled, and felt of the word of life!”

In 1822, the late Dr. Fletcher having resigned his office as Theological Tutor of the Lancashire College, then located at Blackburn, Mr. Payne was invited to become his successor. Toward the end of that year, he yielded to the wishes of the Committee, and accepted the Professorship, but did not enter upon his active duties until the following spring.

It is no matter of surprise that the Committee of this Institution should seek the services of such a man; but the arrival of these overtures occasioned him much anxiety, and gave rise to painful and protracted deliberations as to what course he should take. To leave an attached and affectionate people, among whom he had laboured for eleven years, with great satisfaction and unequivocal tokens of success,—a people whom he had been mainly instrumental in gathering out of the world, and introducing to the church of God,—was a step by no means to be hastily resolved upon. Hence he thought much, prayed for Divine guidance, took counsel with tried and discerning friends; and when, at length, he “yielded to a conviction that his Lord and Master was calling upon him to labour in another department of service,” and that he should be obeying the voice of duty by going to Blackburn,—it was not without painful struggles, and unfeigned reluctance, he surrendered his pastoral charge in Edinburgh.

This feeling was reciprocated by his flock. They submitted to the necessity laid upon them, though not without regret. Many of them acknowledged him as their spiritual father,—he had “begotten them through the gospel;”—and to all he had been the means of religious advancement and benefit; while their peace, as a Christian community, had never been broken, and the bonds of their mutual esteem and friendship had only grown stronger, and been rendered more sacred by continuance. While he yet dwelt in their midst, he had received from them many proofs of affectionate consideration for his comfort; and when he departed from their borders, they bestowed additional tokens of cherished regard and remembrance,—amongst which, a beautiful Polyglott Bible was presented to him by the young people of the congregation, and a handsomely-bound Family Bible was given to Mrs. Payne. In after life, he ever spoke of his flock at Edinburgh in terms of genuine respect and fervent commendation; and most happy was he to renew

his personal intercourse with such of them as remained in this vale of tears, a short time before he entered his heavenly rest, as will appear at the close of this memorial.

But, before I follow the subject of these pages to Lancashire, I would submit to the reader's attention two or three further observations on the extent of his labours in Scotland, and the spirit in which they were conducted, together with a few living testimonies to his untiring zeal and usefulness.

His venerated friend, Dr. Burder, supplies the following remarks on his ministerial career in Edinburgh. "He discharged the duties of his arduous office with unwearied diligence and faithfulness, and with a very encouraging degree of success. He won the hearts of an affectionate and united church, by the kindly sympathies of his meek and gentle spirit, and the holy consistency of his character and conduct."\*

In addition to this general and decided testimony, I may observe that, besides his bland and courteous demeanour, his mild and gentle temper, and his pious and irreproachable life and conversation, he was, above all, assiduously attentive to the high and important claims of his station, as a dispenser of the word of life. Materials, in abundance, for arriving at this conclusion are now before me. He knew too well his responsibilities, as one appointed of God to herald forth the glorious gospel; and he was too deeply sensible of the value of Divine revelation, and of the importance of bringing the people of his charge to understand, and believe, and practise whatever the Bible enjoins, to allow himself to neglect the faithful and continued exhibition of whatever the Scriptures contain. Everything else was made contributory to this; and other matters were either set aside or held in subordination, so that this, his great, his chief object, might be secured. His aim was to present to his people "the whole counsel of God;" and no consciousness of their respect for himself as a man, their love for him as a Christian, or their admiration of his winning behaviour and holy devotedness, would have met his views, and satisfied his conscience, unless he had also known that they honoured him for his ministrations as a diligent and able preacher of "the truth as it is in Jesus." On this point his convictions were deep and abiding. He was anxious to be

\* *Evangelical Magazine*, 1848, p. 396.



regarded as something more than a pleasant companion, a parlour friend, or a person of gentlemanly bearing. Much less would he have been content to win his way to the good opinion of his people by wasting his time in needless visits, and idle chit-chat on the news of the day, the state of the weather, or the affairs of their neighbours. He felt that his was a high and a holy calling ;—that his business was to save souls ;—that his chief employment was the publication of God's everlasting mercy to the perishing children of men ;—and that the chief place for the exercise of his highest and best powers of instrumentality was the pulpit. And hence his watchful concern, his sedulous care ever to appear among his people as “a workman needing not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

Ample evidence of the correctness of what is here stated is now in my possession, arising principally, though not entirely, from the manuscript copies of lectures and sermons which he prepared and delivered during his ministerial course in Edinburgh. A brief record of some of these may here be presented, only premising that they are all closely written, on large-sized note paper, and in a hand so small that each page contains as much matter as is usually found on two printed octavo pages, when brevier type is employed.

- I. Sixty-five Lectures on the Epistle to the Romans, commenced June 6th, 1813, and extending to 123 pages.
- II. Twenty Lectures on the Parables of Christ, and a series of Sermons on Doctrines, commenced August 28th, 1814, —90 pages.
- III. Lectures on the entire Gospel of Matthew, commenced December 3rd, 1818,—268 pages.
- IV. Lectures on the Book of Genesis, commenced January 21st, 1821,—326 pages.
- V. Thirteen Lectures on the Epistle to the Hebrews, commenced June 23rd, 1822,—56 pages.
- VI. Sets of Discourses on topical subjects, preached at different periods, and Sermons on various texts, delivered during the eleven years of his ministry, from 1812 to 1823, extending to upwards of 1000 pages.

Of the merits of the above, in the mass, I cannot speak with

certainty; having found it impracticable to examine the whole, partly on account of the quantity, but, principally, from the impossibility of reading them without the aid of extraordinary magnifying power, or the possession of a microscopic eye. Those, however, which I have been able to read, bear evident marks of a sound judgment, great precision, large stores of knowledge, and a profound submission to the paramount authority of Divine revelation. Their multitude and variety afford sufficient proof of the laborious diligence of the head which prepared, and the hand which penned them; and the intelligence, piety, and increase of the congregation in Albany-Street Chapel, sufficiently attest the satisfaction with which they were received, and the effects which must have accompanied and followed their delivery.

To his constant occupations as minister and pastor, among his own people, he added those of a Christian philanthropist, by associating himself with those benevolent schemes which have for their object the improvement of man's social condition, or the elevation of his moral and religious character, both at home and abroad. Alive to these claims, and ever ready "to do good and communicate," according to the measure of his power, he cheerfully answered the demands which they made, whether upon his time or talents, his pecuniary contributions or personal exertions.

A gentleman, who was one of the deacons, while he held the pastorate at Albany-Street Chapel, and who still retains the same office in the church there, writes as follows:—"Mr. Payne was, while here, ready to every good work, bearing his part, with others, in the business at public meetings of our religious societies. He took much interest in those confederacies which aimed at sending the gospel to the dark parts of Scotland, such as 'The Edinburgh Itinerant Society,' and 'The Congregational Union of Scotland.' He assisted in the formation of both, and took an active part in their operations: indeed, he was one of the Secretaries of the Congregational Union for many years."

My valued friend, Henry Paul, Esq., of Edinburgh, an elder in the "Free Church of Scotland," supplies me with the following:—"My own personal intercourse with the late Dr. Payne is one of pleasing recollection. It owed its origin to our connection with the Bible Society here; and no one could fail to observe the great

interest which he ever took, as well as the sound judgment which he displayed, in seeking to promote the important object which we had in view. It was, however, the evident wish and endeavour of this minister of Christ, during his sojourn in this city, to devote all his mental and bodily powers to the service of his Divine Master; and, with all that piety and ardour of mind with which he was animated, to advance the interests of religion, not only among the members of his own flock, but also in the case of all others with whom he came into contact."

With these testimonies, honourable to the parties who have furnished them, and confirmatory of the statements I have presented in relation to Mr. Payne's public course at Edinburgh, I close this section of his brief memoir; simply remarking, as already intimated, that, in April 1823, he left Scotland, and entered upon his office as Tutor at Blackburn.

## SECTION V.

### PRESIDENT AND THEOLOGICAL TUTOR OF BLACKBURN ACADEMY.

FOR the vigorous discharge of the duties devolving upon him, in his new position at Blackburn, he was "singularly prepared," says Dr. Burder, "by the talents with which he was endowed, by the mental discipline by which he had been trained, and by the stores of scriptural and theological knowledge which he had acquired." \*

His daily conduct in the academical establishment supplied a living commentary on this statement; and its truthfulness is fully attested by those who witnessed his able presidency, and successful Tutorship, during the time he remained in Lancashire. The Rev. R. Slate, in his history of the Blackburn Academy, says,— "During the presidency of Dr. Payne, the number of students continued equal to what it had been, or rather increased; and the Reports mention further applications from candidates, which had to be refused on account of the deficiency of funds, and of the want of room in the house. The annual examinations were conducted

\* *Evangelical Magazine*, 1848, p. 396.

on an extended and improved plan; and at the meeting of the Committee, at Midsummer 1825, an enlarged course of education was submitted and approved. It consisted of the Latin and Greek Classics, and the Biblical Oriental Languages; History, Geography, Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, the Theory of Languages, and General Grammar; Mental Philosophy, Theology, and Ecclesiastical History."

The Reports of the Committee, from year to year, confirm the information given by Mr. Slate, evidencing cordial satisfaction with the Tutor, and bearing decided testimony to his ability, assiduity, and success. In 1826, I find the following:—"Throughout the whole of the examination, the students acquitted themselves much to the satisfaction of the Committee, as well as to the credit of themselves, and their able and faithful Tutors." In 1827:—"The whole examination was highly satisfactory to the Committee, as it clearly evinced the great ability and success of the Tutors, and the application and perseverance of the students; and it fully justified the conviction that this Institution promises to be eminently useful to the Christian church." In 1828:—"The gratifying result of this annual meeting has been to confirm that high satisfaction with which the friends of the Blackburn Academy contemplate the ability and energy displayed in the superintendence of its Academic discipline, and to augment the confidence with which they anticipate its future prosperity, under the care of their valued friend the Theological Tutor, and his esteemed coadjutor."

Mr. Payne, on his removal to Blackburn, in addition to his occupancy of the Professor's chair, became the minister of a congregation assembling in Mount-Street Chapel, in that town. In the *Evangelical Magazine* for 1823, I find the subjoined reference to this fact. "March the 20th, the chapel in Mount Street, Blackburn, was re-opened for public worship. Mr. Bradley, of Manchester, preached in the morning, from 2 Cor. iii. 16, 17; and Mr. Roby, of the same town, in the evening, from Psalm cxv. 25. The church assembling in the chapel having been previously dissolved, by mutual consent, the congregation have unanimously requested the Rev. George Payne, M.A., Theological Tutor in Blackburn Academy, to become their minister." Here he, stately,

preached the word for between two and three years; but finding, as his respected predecessor, the Rev. Dr. Fletcher, had done, that the labours of the regular ministry, in combination with those of the collegiate presidency, were too much for his physical strength, he resigned this post, and confined the principal share of his attention to his college duties. Many of the pious people at Blackburn, who were at this time among his hearers, retain, I am informed, a grateful sense of the value of his ministerial labours, and speak of him in terms of great veneration and respect.

In 1827 he sent to the press a little tractate of 34 pages, entitled—"The Law of Christ, in relation to Offences, unfolded; in an Address to the Churches of the Congregational Order, in the County of Lancaster." It consists of an explanation and enforcement of Matt. xviii. 15-17, and is eminently practical in its character, and adapted to be useful to church-members of all denominations. After an exposition of the law, he considers "the wisdom which shines in it, as exhibited in its beneficial tendency upon the mind of the offender;—its happy influence upon the church with which the parties may be connected, in the promotion of love—of purity—of the increase of the church." He then charges the duty of observing the law, upon individuals, and upon churches in their collective capacity, and concludes with some practical cautions and suggestions. An edition of this tract was published in 1830, by "the Society for the Promotion of Ecclesiastical Knowledge;" and its reprint, and extensive circulation at the present time, would be to confer an important benefit upon Christian professors. It is full of sound wisdom, drawn from the oracles of truth, and is fitted to repress disorder, and to promote peace and good will among the disciples of the Saviour. A brief extract will show the author's sense of the meaning and application of the passage on which his address is founded.

"I would particularly request the reader to observe that it is an authoritative direction. It is not merely recommendation or advice; it is a legislative enactment of the King of kings, and the Lord of lords; it is the law of the Great Head of the church. Inattention to it is not mere heedlessness or imprudence,—it is *rebellion*; and, like all other acts of transgression, exposes, without repentance, to eternal condemnation. I make these remarks, because I have, not unfrequently, met with individuals who admire the wisdom and

benevolence which distinguish this injunction of our Lord, but do not seem to regard it as *LAW*. They do not, apparently, feel it to be bimping upon their consciences. They admit their *folly* in disregarding it, but they manifest little or no consciousness of *guilt*. That same Being, however, who said, 'Swear not at all,'—'Love your enemies,'—'Bless them that curse you,'—has commanded that, when our brethren trespass against us, we should go to them, and endeavour to bring them to repentance, and thus to save them from destruction; and that individual is, accordingly, not a greater rebel against the authority of the Great Head of the church, who uses impious and profane language—who hates his enemies—and curses them that curse him, than another who publishes the faults of his brethren, instead of administering private rebuke."

Hitherto Mr. P. had published nothing but single sermons, or tracts, or pamphlets. He now ventured on a larger and more important work. In the spring of 1828 there issued from the press, in a goodly octavo of 529 pages, his "*Elements of Mental and Moral Science*." A second edition of the book appeared in 1842; and a third edition in 1845. The work is presented in two parts; *Mental Science* occupying about three-fourths, and the *Ethical* division the remaining portion of the volume. The author thus, modestly, and yet in a manly form, introduces himself and his work to the notice of his readers:—

"The subsequent pages owe their origin to the professional engagements of the writer. Expected to impart instruction to the students committed to his care, in the philosophy of the human mind, as well as on subjects strictly theological, he devoted all the time he could command to the task of drawing up a course of lectures on the elements of *Mental and Moral Science*, which should be made to combine, as far as he found it practicable, comprehension with brevity, and might be used as a text-book in his future prelections. His object in the preparation of his lectures was not originality but usefulness. His sole desire was to guide the minds of his pupils to what he regarded as the right decision upon the multifarious topics of inquiry which his plan embraced; and whether he attained that end by presenting to them the statements of others, or what might be, more properly, denominated his own, was to him a matter of no importance whatever. Yet the present work is far from being a mere compilation. Every doctrine, to which he has given such sanction as his name can bestow, has passed through the crucible of his own mind; and his frequent difference from Dr. Thomas Brown, even on several important points in the department of *Mental Science*, and his entire departure from him in that of *Ethics*, will show that he does not slavishly follow any leader, nor consent to hold his mind in bondage to any system, or any man."

These sentiments have been quoted to show the *man*, rather

than to exhibit his work; which, in all its departments, affords evidence of the author's ability to explore the depths of metaphysical research, and to think out each topic presenting itself to his acute and discerning mind. Hence he subjects to searching investigation every point on which he touches; examines, with care, the opinions of other writers, who have preceded him in this field of labour; investigates the views held by Locke, Stewart, Reid, Hume, Shaftesbury, Drs. Hartley, Briggs, Brown, and many more;—exposes, and brushes away what he deems to be fallacious; adopts whatever he finds consistent with fact and truth; and reasons out his conclusions with a clearness and precision, which cannot fail to put his readers into possession of the views which he entertains. A multitude of passages, in support of these remarks, might be cited, if I had room to present them; but the book itself must be read and studied, to arrive at a due appreciation of its importance and value. I have examined some score of critiques on the volume; and while I have discovered but few exceptions to any of the author's statements, I have met, everywhere, with high admiration of his acumen, power of analysis, patience of investigation, clearness of reasoning, correctness of deduction; and much of hearty commendation of this fruit of his pains-taking diligence. An "Eclectic Reviewer" says, "It contains more valuable information, more correct sentiment, more clear, condensed, and conclusive reasoning, on the subjects of Mental and Moral Science, than any single volume we ever perused."

In the second edition, a few of the author's statements, in the department of Mental Science, were somewhat modified, particularly those of "attention—the nature of the emotions—the distinction between desire and volition—the liberty of the will," &c.,—and other portions were slightly condensed, to make way for greater expansion in the Ethical division; into which much new matter was introduced, so as to constitute it, substantially, a new work. The third edition was subjected to revision and improvement, but without any modification of its general principles; while much supplementary matter, amounting to some forty pages, was introduced, in the shape of notes, partly dispersed throughout the volume, and partly printed in an appendix. In these notes the author examines certain statements of Mill, Ballantyne, Allison, Spalding, Bishop

Butler, Drs. Chalmers, Welsh, Wardlaw, Jenkyn, &c.; either animadverting upon what he deemed to be fallacious in their views, or deriving from them support for the opinions advanced in the text of his own book.

From the period when this production of his pen first made its appearance, fourteen years had elapsed before a second edition was called for: but only three years intervened between the issue of the volume in its improved form, and the publication of the third edition; thus showing that, though its advance in public favour was somewhat tardy, in the first instance, it had now attained a more decided, not to say just appreciation; and indicating, too, that the struggles which have been going on amongst us, of late years, for improvements in the great business of education, have induced an increased taste for studies of this order. No one hailed such tokens of progress and elevation with more sincere delight than the author of this work; and hence he could say, with honest truth, that the quickened sale of his book had "awakened his gratitude, and prompted him to spare no efforts he could put forth to give increased value to the present edition."\*

On the 15th of November, 1828, the *Senatus Academicus* of the University of Glasgow was moved by the publication of this work, as is stated in the diploma, to confer on its author the honorary degree of LL.D. And never was literary honour more deservedly acquired, or more meekly worn.

While Dr. Payne was engaged in preparing, and passing through the press, the first edition of this volume, some pecuniary difficulties arose in connection with the Blackburn Academy. The effects of the commercial and manufacturing depression, which had arisen in Lancashire in 1825 and 1826, had not yet passed away; and many gentlemen who had engaged to subscribe largely for a limited number of years, with the view of liberally and effectually sustaining the Institution at its outset, withdrew a portion of their support. The Treasurer, who from the commencement had felt so deep an interest, and taken so active a part in the management of its finances, was called away by death; and the question of remov-

\* This third and best edition is published by J. Gladding, London; and is sold for the comparative trifle of 7s. 6d. Young people! possess yourselves of the volume,—read it,—master it,—and you will bless the memory of its Author as long as you live!



ing the Academy from Blackburn to Manchester, where some thought it would be more efficiently cared for, was one which engaged considerable attention, and about which many meetings for consultation were held. On all these accounts, the funds greatly suffered, and much anxiety was created.

Whether these matters affected Dr. Payne's actual position, or whether they operated in any way to induce him to desire a change, I have no means of supplying accurate information. Certain, however, it is that just at this juncture he received a cordial and pressing invitation to become the Theological and Resident Tutor of the Western Academy, which, after the resignation of the Rev. James Small, it was determined to remove from Axminster to Exeter: This invitation he consented to accept, and consequently dissolved his connection with the Academical Institution at Blackburn.

## SECTION VI.

### PRESIDENT AND THEOLOGICAL TUTOR OF THE WESTERN ACADEMY, AT EXETER.

DR. PAYNE came to Exeter in the summer of 1829, and was cordially welcomed by the Committee and friends of the Western Academy, which was henceforward to be under his presidency. On the 1st of July he entered, formally, upon the duties of his office; and in the evening of that day, in presence of the Committee, and many of the subscribers, together with ministers from different parts of the West of England, and a large congregation, delivered a judicious and highly-appropriate discourse, from 2 Cor. ii. 16. At its close, the Rev. J. Saltren, of Bridport, gave an address to the students; two of whom had obtained permission to follow their beloved and honoured tutor from Blackburn, for whose prelections they cherished a strong and decided preference.

He was now in the full vigour of his manhood: his abilities as a preacher and pastor had been made manifest; his powers and resources as a tutor had been proved and acknowledged; and his reputation as a writer and author was established on a firm and honourable basis. Thus prepared for his arduous and responsible

employment, he commenced his career at Exeter, with singleness of purpose and aim, resolved to consecrate his capabilities and energies to the glory of that Lord and Master whom he rejoiced to honour, and delighted to serve. Nor did he labour in vain. Under his able and judicious direction the Academy prospered, and attained a character and standing in the West of England, and in the denomination generally, which it had never previously possessed. Hence, two years after he had undertaken its presidency, it was found necessary to provide larger and more suitable premises for carrying on its designs; and when it was deemed desirable to purchase a freehold building, for this purpose, one generous friend headed a subscription list with £500,—and others having followed his example, the sum of £3000. was raised and expended, and the object was accomplished to the satisfaction of all parties concerned.

Besides the duties which daily devolved upon him as Theological Professor, and the constant employment of his pen in writing for the press, he was greatly occupied as a preacher of the everlasting gospel. Not that he undertook the engagements of a pastorate, or became the minister of a congregation, as he had been during part of the time he spent at Blackburn; still he was frequently, on the Sabbath-day, found in the pulpits of his brethren in Exeter and its neighbourhood, and in the various towns of Devon and the adjoining counties. This was no more than might have been expected. His name had "spread abroad." The Independent denomination in this lower part of the West of England had not, for many years at least, possessed a resident minister so deservedly celebrated for learning and acquirements; and all persons were eager to avail themselves of his valuable services. Consequently calls were made upon him from all quarters to preach for Schools, Home and Foreign Missions, and other benevolent objects; as well as at Ministerial Ordinations and Settlements, at Chapel Openings and Anniversaries, and on other more ordinary occasions. And never, if health and other claims permitted, was he known to refuse. No man showed greater willingness to aid the cause of God in this way, and none ever rendered help more cheerfully than he did. He was always ready to assist his fellow-labourers, and to promote the interests of religion and the glory of the Saviour. In public meetings also, held in the city and elsewhere, for the purpose of

extending the interests of truth and benevolence, or for elevating the moral and social condition of the people, he was among the foremost to advocate the cause.

One of his first engagements, of this latter order, after he had settled in Devonshire, was the delivery of a course of Lectures on the Evidences of Christianity, to "the Members of the Exeter Tradesmen and Mechanics' Institution," in the winter of 1829-30. The closing Lecture of the course was on "The Argument derived from Miracles," which was afterwards published, and will be found printed in these volumes.\* "On its conclusion," said the *Western Times*, "the Rev. H. Acton rose, and moved a vote of thanks to the Lecturer. He bore ample testimony to the excellence of the arguments of the reverend gentleman, and said the profound attention with which he had been heard by the mechanics would convince the world, that whilst they sought improvement in science and literature, they were not unmindful of the vastly-more important pursuit of religion. Mr. W. Lee seconded the motion, which was carried with enthusiasm." A reviewer of the Lecture, when published, says—"It is one which is characterized by the Author's usual acumen: in detecting the fallacies of the infidel, and in placing the subject in a luminous and incontrovertible form, it is, we think, surpassed by no composition that we have read on the subject of Miracles."

I forbear any remarks of my own on this production, as the reader may examine it for himself in the following pages; but I am tempted to present to his notice Dr. Payne's "dedication" of the pamphlet,—it being, in my view, so singularly felicitous and appropriate.

"To George Brown, Esq., the Chairman of the meeting on the evening referred to,—to the Committee of the Exeter Tradesmen and Mechanics' Institution,—and to all the Members of that Society,—the following Lecture, designed to exhibit the paramount claims of the religion of the New Testament upon our faith and obedience, with earnest prayers that in life they may be governed by its precepts, and in death sustained and cheered by its prospects, is respectfully dedicated by their obedient Servant, the Author."

In his preface to this pamphlet there is a suggestion offered, in his usual modest way, which I deem important, as embodying the

\* Vol. ii., p. 361.

conviction of his own mind upon an interesting matter, especially in these times, when so much is said about attempting to attract the attention of the working-classes to the claims of religious truth. It is as follows :—

“If the Author could venture to use the freedom, he would earnestly exhort his brethren, especially those who are situated in our larger towns, to exhibit more frequently the deep and strong foundations of our holy religion. Experience proves that a course of Lectures on the Evidences of Christianity excites more local interest, and is, accordingly, likely to do more general good than can be reasonably expected from our larger published treatises on that important topic. Many persons may be induced to consider the subject, at the slight cost of attention which is necessary to listen to a course of lectures, who cannot be expected to sit down to the perusal of a formidable volume ; at all events, the experiment is worth making.”

During the next three years, after the printing of this Lecture on Christian Miracles, I do not find that Dr. Payne committed anything to the press. A considerable portion of his leisure, at this period, was employed in visiting Bath, London, and other places, to obtain donations toward the purchase of the college premises; and he was a good deal occupied in arranging and settling the Academic family, as well as his own household in their new habitation. These things, probably, for a season, laid a restraint upon his prolific pen. But in 1834, he published a pamphlet of forty-seven octavo pages, entitled—“The Separation of Church and State calmly considered, in reference to its probable Influence upon the Cause and Progress of Evangelical Truth in this Country.” Two editions of this work appeared; the first under the signature of a “Devonshire Dissenter,” and the other with his own name attached. In his opening remarks, he adverts to the misrepresentations which have been made of the opinions and efforts of Dissenters on the great question at issue, and states, very fairly, what it is they intend, when they plead for the separation of the Church from the State. Thus he places the matter :—

“It is seldom the case that the sentiments of an individual, or a sect, are exhibited with perfect correctness by one who endeavours to overthrow them. Even in the absence of any disposition to indulge in misrepresentation, the medium of prejudice through which he views them, affecting his own conceptions of their nature and consequences, will certainly, and perhaps uncon-

sciously, lead him to present them in a false light to others. The Dissenters of this country do not wish to think that their opinions have been intentionally misrepresented; yet the apparent reluctance with which our explanations have been received, renders it impossible for us to give, at least to the more prominent advocates of the endowed Church, credit for the possession of all that candour and singlemindedness, with which a controversy so important as that which has commenced between the Church and Dissenters should be carried on.

“From the press, and from the senate of our country, the charge against us has issued, and is now resounding throughout the whole length and breadth of the land, that the great object of the present movement is to destroy the Established Church. Our reply, in effect at least, has been that we merely wish to destroy the civil establishment of that Church;—two things which could not have been identified, had there been a little more candour, or a little more discernment, on the part of our opponents. The least reflection upon the two preceding forms of expression cannot fail to bring the conviction to every honest mind, that, in the first case, the thing which is desired to be destroyed is the Church, *i. e.* the Episcopalian section of the church; while, in the latter case, it is not the Church, but its alliance with the State. The dissolution of the conjugal union between two individuals, who ought not to have formed it, is not surely the destruction of the female, but the destruction of a relation merely in which she had stood, or had been supposed to stand, to the other party. The Church, as it is called by courtesy, *i. e.* the Episcopalian denomination, is now the spouse of the State (we think she ought to be the spouse of Christ only);—our anxiety is simply to obtain a writ of divorce. If our opponents will continue to represent this as a desire to put the wife to death, the public must judge whether the defect is in our statements, or in their perceptions.”

After some further observations in support of the foregoing statement, he proceeds to show that—“I. The separation of Church and State includes in it the withdrawalment, from the Episcopalian denomination, of the exclusive patronage of the State,—of that countenance and favour which, in various ways, the Government has it in its power to show, and actually does show, to that body of Christians. II. The separation of Church and State involves, further, the withdrawalment from the former of all that pecuniary support which the Government, out of the public property, or revenues of the country, has hitherto afforded to it;—and the throwing of it upon the voluntary principle for its support.” These propositions are sustained and argued out, and various objections made by Lord John Russell, the Bishop of Exeter, Dr. Chalmers, and others, are met and replied to. The words “calmly

considered" are most appositely employed in the title: for never had the question a more dispassionate, and yet keen and thorough sifting, than it meets with in this terse, vigorous, convincing pamphlet; and yet without a particle of bigotry, or a sentence that can justly give offence. The Anti-State-Church Association could not do a better service to the cause it advocates than to reprint and circulate it by thousands.

Hitherto Dr. Payne had lived in the bosom of his endeared household, with the wife of his youth, and all his beloved children around him, save two infants he lost by death when residing in Edinburgh. And never was there a happier or more joyous family circle; in the midst of which the man of severe study and toilsome research delighted to unbend his mind, and, while he shed smiles on all around, to drink his fill of pleasure too. But that domestic hearth was now to be invaded; and by some of its members the hallowed scenes of childhood and youth were to be forsaken, and exchanged for the sterner duties of life. With two of his daughters, the good, the affectionate and happy father was called to part. One had married the Rev. J. W. Gordon, a missionary to the East Indies, in the service of the London Missionary Society; and the other had become the wife of the Rev. M. Hodge, an agent of the same Society, who had received an appointment to Jamaica. The venerated sire felt as a man and a father the obligation which had come upon him to surrender his beloved offspring, and accompanied each to their respective ports of embarkation, that he might there exchange with them and their partners the tokens of mutual love, and breathe forth his kind but agonizing farewell. Yet, as a devout servant of God, and a minister of Christ, concerned for the glory of his Saviour, and for the extension of his kingdom upon earth, he yielded his children to the superior claims of his Master and Lord, and, when he had bid them adieu, returned with a subdued but grateful heart to comfort those who were left at home, and to commend his departed ones to the protection and favour of Heaven. Nor did he indulge a murmur, or send forth one sigh of regret for the sacrifice which he had meekly laid on the altar of his God. Rather, he rejoiced to know that those whom he had so presented were the servants of the Redeemer, who had bought them with his blood, and who had a right to dispose of them as seemed

good in his sight; and to His mandate the father and the saint submissively bowed.

Towards the end of the year 1834, just as he had parted with his daughters, I was favoured with opportunities of renewing my intercourse with my valued friend, whom I had not seen since his removal from Blackburn to Devonshire; and shortly after, I enjoyed the privilege of spending some time with him and his family at the Academy House. Here I found him intent on the great business to which he had devoted his whole life, employing, as I understood, some thirteen or fourteen hours each day either in his professional engagements with the students, or in literary avocations in his study, and allowing himself little or no respite from his laborious toil. His cordiality and kindness, however, had in no wise abated; his modesty and humility were as conspicuous as ever; while his piety and devotional fervour seemed to have attained a higher elevation.

On this occasion, he introduced and led some extended conversations touching what he deemed to be the erroneous views on Election, and cognate subjects, propounded by the late Rev. Richard Watson, in his "Theological Institutes," which had been published some time before, and which had produced considerable sensation in certain quarters. He evidenced marked anxiety upon the subject, and deeply regretted that no direct and extended reply had hitherto appeared. I expressed sympathy with his views, and urged him to employ his pen on the subject. He intimated that he had entertained an intention so to do, and had made some preparations; but that he felt a degree of difficulty, fearing that a separate publication might not circulate freely among parties whom he was most anxious to set right upon the topics adverted to; and yet not seeing his way clear, at present, to print in any other form. Early in 1836, we again met. It was at an Ordination Service, when he had to deliver a charge to one of his former students; and, to my great satisfaction, I learned that he had completed his answers to the statements of the celebrated Arminian divine, having embodied them in a volume of Lectures which was then in the printer's hands.

Shortly after, a full-sized octavo was presented to the public eye, bearing the title of "Lectures on Divine Sovereignty, Elec-

tion, the Atonement, Justification and Regeneration." Two years subsequent to the issue of this work from the press, a second edition was demanded; and a third edition was published in 1846. In his preface to the first edition, in assigning reasons for the publication of these Lectures, he adverts to some things which all, who are concerned for the establishment and increase of true religion, would do well to consider.

"The Writer may be mistaken,—he would fain hope that he is so,—yet he has not been able to escape the conviction, that in the present day, there does not exist, among the members of the church of Christ at large, a sufficiently correct and comprehensive knowledge of the first principles in religion—of the leading doctrines of the gospel. He is not without his fears, that even many Christians hold rather a form of sound words—though even the form held by some is not a very accurate one—than possess an acquaintance with things; nor can he altogether divest himself of the apprehension, that, if a moral deluge were to sweep away our accustomed words and phraseology on religious subjects, it would not, in very numerous instances, leave many ideas behind it. It is at least certain, that we have less of extensive reading, of vigorous thinking, and of profound meditation, upon the great principles of theological science, in all its branches, than in the 'olden times.' He is constrained to think that this deficiency, result from what cause it may, is most deeply to be regretted. It is truth, not words, that constitutes the food of the soul. If the orthodoxy of an individual, or of a body of Christians, be a mere orthodoxy of phraseology,—if there be not found among the members of the body right ideas, and correct and luminous thinking, as well as right words,—there can be no spiritual growth. They cannot rise to eminence in experimental and practical religion. It is a sentiment which deserves to be most seriously pondered upon by the church in the present day, that the real piety of an age, though it may doubtless fall considerably short, can never be in advance of the knowledge of that age. The Author of this volume presents to his readers what he hopes will be found to be a correct and luminous exposition of those first principles in religion on which it professes to treat. He has endeavoured to avoid that vagueness of statement in which some writers, of great eminence and excellence, have unwisely and unfortunately permitted themselves to indulge,—to remove ambiguities,—to give precision to the definition of terms,—to explain the meaning of current, though often very ill-understood phraseology, as well as occasionally to correct it; and though Calvinistic in his own views, he has tried every sentiment supported in this volume, not by the statements of John Calvin, but by those of Jesus Christ and his apostles. His leading object has been to awaken a greater spirit of reading and research among the members of the church at large, and to put into their hands a volume which might tend, with the blessing of God, to promote generally a more correct and familiar acquaintance with the great principles on which it treats than perhaps at present prevails."



The second edition was sent forth without any alterations; but in the third edition the author made "considerable additions [pp. 213-224] to the direct Scripture proofs of the general aspect of the Atonement,"—excluded the appendix, which consisted chiefly of remarks upon Mr. Stuart's Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans, having examined the controverted points in his "Congregational Lecture on Original Sin,"—and added a new appendix of some 70 pages, chiefly in the form of strictures upon recent publications by Dr. Marshall, and Mr. Haldane on the Atonement; and upon Dr. Jenkyn's statements on the Influence of the Holy Spirit.

Of these Lectures it would be difficult to speak in terms of too high commendation. If Dr. Payne's volume on "Mental and Moral Science" stamped his character as an able and acute metaphysician, this one, in an equal degree, proves him to have been a sound theologian—a judicious and accomplished divine. It will ever remain a standard work in English Theology, and be appealed to as among the most satisfactory and luminous elucidations of the great doctrines of which it treats. In those seminaries which have been established by our missionaries, in the East Indies, for training native evangelists, it is in common use; and I know at least one eminent Theological Professor, in this country, who makes it his text-book in his prelections on the topics it embraces: I know also many ministers of our own and of other denominations who frequently recur to it, and cherish for it the highest regard. I only wish it was generally possessed, and read, and studied by the members of our churches and congregations; and then it might be hoped that much of error would be corrected, much of fickleness and dwarfishness pass away, and, by its instrumentality, connected with other aids, our people become an intelligently pious and strong-minded race. Of all the works published by the author, it is the one which has been most extensively reviewed and remarked upon; and in every critique which has fallen under my notice, both the author and his book are spoken of in strains of high admiration and respectful eulogy.

In May, 1836, Dr. Payne responded to an invitation to preside over the deliberations of the "Congregational Union of England and Wales," and was constituted Chairman of the Assembly for

that year. He viewed this as a token of esteem, on the part of his brethren; and felt himself happy in being able to reciprocate their kindness, and to identify himself, thus prominently, with the movements of the body to which he belonged, and to aid the objects promoted by the Union. In all these he cherished a lively interest, for he was from conviction and choice an enlightened and decided Congregationalist; and few things gave him greater joy than to witness and help forward zealous and united efforts to advance the kingdom of Christ, by upholding and extending the benefits of a scriptural polity.

Soon after his return home from the discharge of this public duty, he printed a pamphlet on "The Operation of the Voluntary Principle in America: an Extract from the recent Work of Drs. Reed and Matheson." To this "Extract" he wrote a preface of sixteen pages, and added also an appendix. The preface consists of an appeal to Churchmen and Dissenters on the alliance of the Church with the State, in which he contends powerfully for the dissolution of the unholy connection. His arguments are based, principally, on the manifest failure of the compulsory principle in providing for the religious wants of the people, and the scripturalness of voluntarism. The appendix is a reply to a writer in *Fraser's Magazine*, who reviewed Drs. Reed and Matheson's work. The preface is penned with much spirit and decision. It deserves to be reprinted, and circulated as a separate tract. A few sentences will show his impression of the importance of the question, and the duty of Englishmen in relation to it.

"No reflecting man, contemplating the signs of the times, can possibly doubt that we are on the eve of a more tremendous conflict of opinion, in regard to the Established Church of the country, than any which the nation has as yet witnessed. The all-engrossing questions will ere long become—'Is it compatible with the rights of conscience—with the principles, and laws, and spirit of Christianity,—and is it the best mode of providing for the religious instruction of a country, for the State to take any denomination of Christians into union with itself, to employ the ministers of that denomination as its agents in teaching religion to the nation at large, and to compel all its inhabitants to contribute to their support?' This is the question of questions in the debate between Churchmen and Dissenters. All others dwindle into insignificance in comparison of it. It is the duty of every man in the land, capable of forming a judgment upon this question, to take it into his careful, and candid, and devout consideration. It

is the duty of all who have come to a decision to avow it;—*of the Churchman* to show, if he can, that the alliance of Church and State is scriptural and expedient;—nor less so, *that of the Dissenter* to prove, if he be able, that it necessarily brings the former into vassalage to the latter,—corrupts her principles, mars her purity, defaces her glory, and paralyzes her influence. On this subject there ought to be no neutrals. The subject is too important,—it has too powerful a bearing upon the welfare of the country, to admit of neutrality. Nor when the conflict shall have become more general (as it unquestionably will become) will it be practicable for any man of influence to remain neutral. He would justly incur the suspicion of each party, and be rewarded, as all trimmers deserve to be, with the contempt of both.”

In the early part of 1837, Dr. Payne lost two valued friends by death, whose memory he has embalmed in sermons preached at the respective periods of their departure to the heavenly world. The first of these is styled—“The Response of the Church to the Promise of the Second Coming of her Lord: a Discourse delivered on the occasion of the lamented Death of the late Mr. Heudebourck, of Taunton, on Lord’s day, February 5th, 1837.” The text is Rev. xxii. 20, 21; and the Sermon is inscribed—“To the bereaved Widow, sorrowing not as one who has no hope,—to the Children and the Children’s Children, of the venerable Saint who has entered into the rest of heaven, with fervent prayers that all may at length rejoin him there,—this Discourse is, with great affection, inscribed, by their faithful Friend, the Author.” In an advertisement prefixed to the Sermon, there comes out one of those beautiful traits of modesty which so eminently distinguished this humble-minded preacher. It appears that he was summoned to the discharge of this duty at a time which left him but a few hours for the preparation of his discourse; and hence, when the family of the deceased pressed for its being printed, he was “thrown,” as he says, into a state of great perplexity, feeling that his hasty production was “not worthy to meet the public eye.” This shows the humility of the man. But his apology was not needed. A minister so deeply versed in the word of God, and so accustomed to prepare both for the pulpit and the press, could be at no loss, though within the brief space of a few hours, to compose a discourse worthy of being heard, and suitable to be printed. Accordingly, I find that the Sermon is a luminous exposition of the passage selected, and a beautiful tribute of respect to the memory of his departed friend.

Then comes "A Funeral Discourse occasioned by the Death of the late Rev. Joseph Buck, of Wiveliscombe, delivered April 9th, 1837," from Phil. i. 21,—"*To die is gain.*" The preacher considers—"I. To whom death will prove a gain. II. In what respects death will be gain to the people of God;—it will be so in reference to their abode—their state—their society—their enjoyments. III. Some of the practical lessons which the subject is adapted to teach;—it is calculated to remove those fears of death by which some of the Lord's people are held in bondage—to assuage our grief under the loss of beloved relatives and friends who have fallen asleep in Christ—to awaken the deepest concern for those to whom death, were it to remove them in their present state, would not be gain, but infinite, eternal loss." The respected minister, on whose removal to heaven this Sermon was preached, was formerly a student of the Western Academy, and had been settled in Somersetshire for many years. He was a man of unblemished reputation and considerable usefulness. For the interests of the Institution by which he had been trained for ministerial labour he cherished affectionate solicitude; and by his attendance at its Committee meetings, and in other ways, he was often brought into contact with the subject of this memoir. Thus a friendship sprang up between them, and continued unbroken till arrested by the hand of death.

His next publication came from the press soon after these funeral discourses, and is entitled—"The Church of Christ considered, in reference to its Members, Objects, Duties, Officers, Government and Discipline." It is a 12mo. volume of 116 pages, and is divided into eight sections. "1. The meaning of the term church. 2. The description of persons of whom a church should consist. 3. The principles which are developed in, and lead to the formation of a church. 4. The objects which a church should aim to secure. 5. The duties which are incumbent upon the members of a church. 6. The officers of a church. 7. The government of a church. 8. The discipline of a church." On all these topics the aim of the writer is to answer the question, "What saith the Scripture?" To the sacred volume he makes his appeal, adducing the principles and practices of apostolic churches, and showing that these supply the only legitimate rules for the governance of Christ's

spiritual kingdom. Questions of expediency, and of accommodation to circumstances, and prejudices, and pre-conceived opinions, he treats as of no authority in settling the matters which are here discussed; while the laws of Christ's house, as made known in the sacred volume, he maintains, all professed Christians are bound to reverence and obey. The sections 6 and 7 are worthy the especial attention of those who occupy official positions in the churches. A right understanding of their respective duties, and a simple adherence to scriptural directions, as here exhibited, would save many worthy men, both in the ministry and out of it, from much inquietude, and Christian churches from disturbance and injury. On the obligation resting upon Dissenters to acquaint themselves with their principles, and to act upon and diffuse them, and of their power to promote true religion, he thus speaks in his introduction to the work :—

“The present Writer is persuaded that Congregational principles are powerfully adapted to develope and improve character,—to separate the precious from the vile,—to promote caution, watchfulness, humility, love, zeal, and enterprise,—to elicit, and to give the stay and support of habit to all those holy affections which the Spirit of God implants in the hearts of his people, and to prepare them for a more splendid career of moral improvement when mortality shall have been swallowed up of life. -If we do not now reap a full harvest of benefit from them, the sole reason, as the Author cannot but think, is, that by a part, perhaps a considerable part of the body, they are but imperfectly understood, or but feebly held. Let them only obtain, as we trust they will, a firmer establishment in the intelligent confidence of the members of the denomination at large, and especially let them be brought more vigorously into action, and, unless the Writer is greatly mistaken, then abundant spiritual fruit will speedily show, with a power of evidence not to be resisted, that they form integrant parts of that revelation the ultimate design of which, in relation to man at least, is to transform him into the image of his Maker. Believing, as we do, and as it is known that we do, that our distinctive tenets form integrant parts of Divine truth, are we not bound to inculcate them? How can we keep silence, and yield, at the same time, full obedience to conscience and to God? We believe that the principles of Congregational Dissent rest on inspired authority; and we consequently feel, and powerfully feel, that we must prove unfaithful servants, if, while giving to the weightier matters of the law that prominence which their higher importance demands, we neglect to inculcate what, in our judgment, revelation teaches in reference to the lesser matters of the law. We cannot forget that to the command to preach the gospel to every creature, addressed by Christ to the apostles, he himself added the injunction,—

'teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.' The leavening influence of Dissent, upon the country at large, has not been proportioned to our numbers; and chiefly, it is conceived, on account of the feeble grasp with which too many amongst us hold their own principles. To the same cause also must be ascribed certain practical evils which exist in the body. These, in most cases, are evils of administration,—the result of ignorance, not radical imperfections of the system. Let our churches be more fully instructed on this point,—be led to see more distinctly *how* Congregational principles should be brought into action; and then proceed, with wisdom, and prudence, and Christian love, to carry theory into practice; and the result, it is confidently expected, will prove that they are more powerfully adapted than any other to promote those great spiritual purposes which it is the design of every system of ecclesiastical polity to secure."

A tolerably large edition of this work having been nearly exhausted, in 1842, Dr. Payne published an Abridgment, entitled—"A Manual of Congregational Principles," excluding what was controversial in the larger book, and adapting it to Bible Classes and Sabbath Schools, "where," as he says, "the children receive instruction—as all *our own* children ought to do—in our denominational principles." The 12mo. volume should be in the possession of every minister, and intelligent person, both male and female, in our churches and congregations. And in relation to the "Manual," a writer in the *Eclectic Review* says,—"*Dissenting ministers and public-spirited laymen should purchase this publication by scores, and make it a matter of business, by sale or gift, to put it into wide circulation. If we would reap in favour of Nonconformist principles, we must sow in favour of them,—a very elementary lesson this, but one, unhappily, which thousands among us have yet to learn.*" \*

During the Academical vacation this year, Dr. Payne visited Ireland, and, for several Sabbaths, supplied the pulpit of George-Street Chapel, Cork. He had never before crossed the Irish Channel, and was glad of the opportunity of becoming, in some degree, acquainted with the manners and habits of the population of that ill-fated country on their native soil. Some things he met with there, as he told me a few weeks after his return, pleased him

\* Mr. Snow, the enterprising publisher of these volumes, I am happy to state, has just reprinted the above two little works, in a neat, but cheap form, for general distribution. Let all who read this note remember the words of the Reviewer, and instantly act upon his wise suggestion.

greatly; but many others excited his sorrowful pity, and not a few awakened pain, or drew forth disgust. His keen sense of the humorous was often brought into play, by the sly wit, ready repartees, and unabashed blunders of his Irish friends; but the social and moral debasement of the people,—their recklessness, improvidence, utter lack of self-reliance, cringing dependance, and constant expectation for others to do for them what they ought to be doing for themselves,—together with their appalling superstition, made his heart bleed, and stirred his spirit with strong emotion. He was not, indeed, insensible to their wrongs, and in these he beheld one mighty cause of their degradation; but, having been for so many years accustomed to the thrifty habits and manly exertions of the Scots, he could not fail to perceive that Ireland and her sons would be vastly improved and elevated, if her people possessed and wielded, as they might do, the elements of forethought, diligence, and perseverance. It was seldom he went from home on excursions of this kind; nor did he often take pains to study his fellow-beings amidst the bustling scenes of every-day life. When, however, he was taken from his beloved seclusion, and thrown among the multitude, he could scan the features of human character, and observe and measure the varied phases of social existence, if not with the quickness and relish of a man of the world, yet with much of true discernment, and with still more of philanthropic regard. But the study and the lecture room—these were his favourite haunts; and to these he returned, from his Irish visit, with heart-felt zest and renewed delight.

For the next three or four years he sent forth no separate publication, save the second edition of his *Theological Lectures*, and a couple of small pamphlets, which will be noticed below. Still his busy pen was not wholly laid aside, as the Reviews of the day and other periodicals can testify. His comparative abstinence, as an author, at this time, is accounted for by his domestic condition. Health, and peace, and comfort, had long dwelt in his abode, and had rendered him a joyous husband and a delighted father; but now the clouds gathered around his horizon, and his path became darkened by sorrow, and bedewed with tears. His beloved wife, on a journey from London, in the summer of 1838, took cold; and this laid the foundation for a complication of diseases which, in succes-

sion, bore down her physical frame, until she was carried to the grave. She was not wholly laid aside from active duties till the following year; and even then her continued flow of spirits, and her uncomplaining patience, kept from the eye of the stranger and the visitant much of her severe and protracted suffering. But to those members of her family who were constantly with her, the painful agony she endured was too well known; and to the feeling heart of her tender and affectionate husband had become a perpetual source of disquietude and anxiety.

To the cause of trouble arising from the illness of Mrs. Payne, another of bitterest disappointment and anguish was added in the death of his eldest son. On this young man the kind father had placed many of his fondest hopes. He had been a lively, fine spirited child; and on his approach to manhood had endeared himself to his friends and acquaintance by many amiable qualities, and by the evident possession of talents capable of being turned to good account. Circumstances arose, however, which rendered it expedient for him to emigrate; and he left his native shores for Australia early in 1838. It was a severe trial to the parents to part with their elder boy; but their piety taught and enabled them to submit, and led them in confidence to commend him to that God who had been their own guide and support, and who forsook them not in this hour of need. Tidings of his safe arrival reached home in due course; and these were succeeded by a letter, which they received in November 1839, announcing some favourable prospects of a temporal nature which had opened before him; and, above all, affording evidence that a change of heart had taken place, and a decision had been formed to make God's people his chosen associates. Three days afterwards, a communication came to hand telling the mournful tale that he was no more an inhabitant of earth. In the previous June, the very day on which he attained his majority, he became suddenly chilled, and in the evening, feeling unwell, he retired to bed;—fever ensued, and in a few days he sank into the arms of death. The Rev. Thomas Q. Stow, of Adelaide, who sent the melancholy tidings, had often seen and conversed with him during his short residence in that distant land, and expressed the strongest confidence that he had rapidly ripened for heaven. This was consolation for the bereaved ones; but the



blow was deeply felt, and by none more deeply than the venerated head of the family. One of his daughters, recurring to the event, in a note to me, says—"In this trial our honoured parents could not but trace much mercy; and while they sorrowed they believed, and therefore said—'All is well!'"

Passing from these scenes of domestic tribulation, I have now to direct the reader's attention to some other productions of Dr. Payne's pen. Just before the intelligence reached him of his son's death, he had prepared "A Letter to the Editor of the American Biblical Repository, containing Remarks upon a Paper in that Work by Professor Stuart on Original Sin;" and soon as he recovered a little from the shock which his feelings had endured by that sad stroke, he printed the document in an octavo pamphlet of 20 pages. It is controversial in its character, and presents a specimen of the author's candour and fairness, and, at the same time, of his power and pungency in dealing with an opponent. Most of the statements and arguments employed in it will be found much extended in his "Congregational Lecture" on the same important doctrine. Two or three sentences, from the preface, I may present, as indicative of the modest estimate he formed of himself, and of his fearlessness in upholding what he believed to be the truth.

"I hope I may be allowed to issue this little work, without being subjected to the charge of arrogantly assuming the office of director of the public opinion. To be a helper of the faith of those who are younger in years, and even more immature in thought, than the present writer, is all that he aspires to. It is his consolation, to know that the denomination to which he deems it an honour to belong, enrolls in its ranks many men far fitter and abler than he is to guide the mind of the public. (May their number be greatly augmented!) Yet he would win, if possible, the encomium passed by our Lord on the woman of imperishable memory, 'She hath done what she could.'—He does not deem it necessary to make any apology to Mr. Stuart for the freedom with which he has examined his statements. He feels assured, by the independent character of that gentleman's mind, that he would be sorry to receive one. I am not sensible of having written a word with any view but that of opposing what appear to me errors and mistakes. I have never, consciously, misrepresented the Professor. If, in any respect, I have mistaken his meaning, it is not without having done my best to avoid it: but his arguments, when, as I have thought, on the side of error, I have considered fair game. I have shown them no more mercy than I could avoid,—not more than I would wish to have shown to my own; for in proportion to our approximation to the pure and

simple love of truth, will be our pleasure that truth gains the victory, even though it should be by the exposure of our own mistakes and prejudices."

In 1841, he published a pamphlet which furnished additional evidence of his high regard to the interests of truth and liberty. It consists of 16 octavo pages, and is styled—"Facts and Statements in Reference to the Bible-printing Monopoly." At the time it appeared, the labours of Dr. Thompson, and the letters of Dr. Campbell, had created a considerable sensation among all classes of the community; and the subject of removing restrictions on the printing and circulation of the Word of God obtained attention everywhere. Deeply interested in this question, and anxious for its suitable adjustment, and yet fearing lest the case should fail to make a due impression in some quarters, from the lack of clear, compact information, he gathered up the "facts and statements put forth; simplified, arranged, and condensed them;"—and thus prepared and sent out a vigorous and well-directed document, which told much in the West of England, and helped on the downfall of the hateful monopoly.

During the month of August, this year, in the period of the usual vacation, he paid a last visit to the scenes of his childhood and youth, at Walgrave, and preached in what had been for many years his father's pulpit. His last discourse here was founded on John xvii. 15, and produced, I am informed, on those who heard it a very general and deep impression. Circumstances, no doubt, contributed to this. His sister, Mrs. Smith, was then near the end of her days, and in about a month afterwards was taken to "the house appointed for all living." The probability that he should "see her face no more in the flesh" greatly affected the good man; and the feeling thus induced he carried with him into the pulpit, where, amidst many conflicting emotions, he proclaimed the truth to some with whom he had been conversant from his earliest years, but whom he never expected to behold again, till all should meet at the great judgment-day. Having taken leave of these ancient friends, and bid a final adieu to his beloved sister, he returned once more to his endeared home, and resumed his accustomed avocations.

"The Elements of Language and General Grammar" was his

next publication. It bears the date of 1843 in the title-page; but it was put to press before the end of the preceding year, and is a 12mo. volume of 236 pages. A "College and School Edition," in foolscap 8vo., was published in 1845. The object of the author was to supply a compendium of the principles of language and general grammar, for the use of the higher classes in our several schools,—intelligent and inquiring young people in general,—and especially the junior students in our various colleges. The work contains a clear and philosophical review of natural, conventional, spoken, and written language,—its origin, object, and character;—together with the science of grammar, and the classification of words or parts of speech. In carrying out his design, he examines the statements of Horne Tooke, Harris, Crombie, Hurwitz, and other writers on language, and presents, in a comparatively small compass, the substance of many elaborate and expensive treatises upon the topics which he here discusses. Yet nothing is handled superficially,—that was not the author's wont;—on the contrary, he goes through the whole subject, and gives the results of much extensive reading, close thinking, and varied observation, in a compact form, and furnishes a book which cannot fail to be useful, wherever it is known and diligently employed. It ought to be in the hands of thousands of young people in this favoured land.

In the spring of 1843, Dr. Payne took up his pen in opposition to that abortive monstrosity, Sir James Graham's Education Bill, which, had just then been introduced into the House of Commons, and sent forth a 12mo. pamphlet of 32 pages, entitled—"The Question: Is it the Duty of the Government to provide the Means of Education for the People? examined." The Bill, of course, he denounces in terms of deserved severity, and applies to the "question" various tests. He argues the point with his usual clearness and force, and towards the close of his examination sums up the whole matter thus:—

"I come, then, to the conclusion that, as all these difficulties embarrass the opinion that it is the duty of the civil ruler to provide the means of religious instruction for the nation, it is *not* his duty to do it. That the provision of such instruction is beyond his province, *ultra vires* of his relation and office,

—that he should confine himself, like every one else, to his lawful employment,—should carefully protect the natural and civil rights of the community (among the most important of which is the full right of every man to teach and propagate his religious tenets, without exposure to pains and civil disabilities); but that he should leave the teaching of religion to others—to parents—to ministers of the various denominations—to religious men whose hearts burn with the love of God, and the love of souls, and who will infallibly do the work, and, with the blessing of God, do it efficiently, if everything be removed from the institutions of the country which is adapted to destroy or impede their influence."

Dr. Johnson somewhere says,—“Life is not a series of great events and illustrious actions; it is from minute particulars, and casual indications of feeling, that we form our estimate of those around us.” I was reminded of these sagacious observations on perusing the following note, written at this time, by Dr. Payne, to his friend and former pupil, the Rev. Evan Davies, the Editor of these volumes, with whom he delighted to hold intercourse often as opportunities were afforded. His slight advertence to his labours and afflictions—the value he sets upon the kindness of his correspondent—the reference he makes to his inability to lay out a sum of money on a matter that had become necessary to his personal comfort—and the lowly view he takes of himself, are “little indications” of condition and character that truly belonged to the man.

EXETER, *March 19th, 1813.*

My dear Davies,

I feel that I owe you many apologies for not writing long before this; but hard work, afflictions of various kinds, and many circumstances, have prevented. I trust you will not impute the delay to lack of interest and affection. Be assured I most highly appreciate your kind and active friendship. There are few indeed whom I love with more tenderness of affection than yourself, and your dear partner, of whom I need say no more than that I have always thought her a treasure worthy of you.—I avail myself of your kind offer to aid me. I suffer so much, in many ways, by the loss of teeth, that I must, I believe, resort to a dentist. The expense here—for a complete set, which I want, is more than I can afford. I thought I might do better and cheaper in London, and wrote to two. The lowest, however, is twenty guineas. \* \* \* Now if you can obtain information about the man, and his success, I should be greatly obliged. Perhaps also you could make inquiries whether I could get the necessary help cheaper. I would cheerfully go to the extent of fifteen guineas; but I don't think I am worth more than to have that sum expended upon me, even

if I could afford it. \* My poor wife is as usual,—no prospect, I fear, of improvement. Best love to both.

Yours truly,

GEORGE PAYNE.

“Strictures on certain Portions of Dr. Marshall’s late Work on the Atonement, addressed to the Ministers, Licentiates, and Students of the United Secession Church in Scotland,” came from the press this year, in octavo, 42 pages, under the signature of “An English Congregational Minister.” Dr. Marshall had written his book, it appears, intending to prove a limitation in the Atonement to the elect; but in the course of his arguments had stated that it was a “general remedy,” and that on the ground of its acceptance by God, as the Moral Governor of the world, the offers of mercy in the gospel should be made to all men. This contrariety between his avowed intention and actual performance did not escape the keen perception of Dr. Payne; and as the question involved was a serious one, and was, at that time, much agitated in the northern portion of the kingdom, he employed himself in exposing Dr. M.’s fallacious reasoning, and establishing the views so ably propounded in his published Lectures on the same subject, and now generally held by modern Calvinists. The work is penned in his usual perspicuous, vigorous style, and will amply repay the attention of the reader who may desire to see the scriptural doctrine on this important point ably vindicated.

Another terse and powerful pamphlet, of 31 octavo pages, on this same controversy, was published by him the following year, designated—“Remarks upon a Pamphlet entitled ‘The Doctrine of the Universal Atonement examined,’ ascribed to the Rev. David Thomas, of Mauchline;—by an English Congregational Minister.” Mr. Thomas, it seems, had taken similar ground to that occupied by Dr. Marshall, and had presented equally inconclusive reasoning. This Dr. P. again brings to the test, and, by reiterated statements

\* In other ways, besides that adverted to in the above letter, Dr. Payne was required to practise economy and self-denial. It is true he did this, as is well known to his familiar friends, without any complaining; but I cannot forbear expressing a sense of shame and pain, that a man who was one of the most learned, laborious, and useful ministers, and one of the brightest ornaments of the denomination to which he belonged, should have been allowed to feel the pressure of, comparatively, straitened circumstances. His services ought to have had an ample recompence; and yet, through a long life, and with a numerous family, his professional income was never much above £200. a year!

and arguments, confirms and establishes what he had previously produced in his answer to Dr. Marshall.

In October, 1844, he spent some weeks in London, and delivered what is denominated the "Congregational Lecture." The subject assigned to him was "Original Sin." Previous to this, his general health had somewhat suffered; and the anxiety occasioned by the continued illness of Mrs. Payne, together with the labour bestowed in the preparation of this series of Lectures (for he could do nothing by halves), had induced an occasional depression, and had given him much of a feeble and care-worn appearance. Hence the tone of the following note to his friend at Richmond:—

My dear Davies,

I have been very much indisposed the last ten days, and am not yet recovered. This London life does not agree with me at all. I begin to fear I shall not be able to see you at Richmond, which I do assure you will be a great disappointment to me. I will yet strive to run down some day next week; but I cannot fully promise. My lectures—partly unfinished—require much time, and occasion some perplexity, from the difficulty of condensation;—the attendance also, though they tell me not worse than usual, is to me very depressing.\* My very affectionate regards to Mrs. Davies.

I am,

My dear Davies,

Very truly yours,

GEORGE PAYNE.

The Lectures here referred to, eight in number, and occupying 454 octavo pages, were published in April 1845. By many, they are regarded as the author's "master-piece." Undoubtedly, they are one of the most valuable contributions to theological literature

\* It deserves consideration, whether something should not be done with a view of increasing the attendance on these occasions. From the recondite character of the Lectures, it is scarcely to be expected that what is conventionally termed a popular audience can be collected to hear them. But surely there might be found a sufficient number of intelligent persons in the Metropolitan congregations, especially among the young, to make up a large assembly, provided the privilege of listening to such prolections was suitably brought before them, and earnestly pressed upon their attention. I know many people are ready to say, and some do say, "We shall be sure to have the Discourses in print, and we had rather read the book than go to hear the Lectures." But, it may be asked, is there not some consideration due to the Lecturer? Is it suitable, or kind, or even right, to engage a man of learning and ability in months of toilsome, laborious preparation,—and then, at the moment when he most needs sympathy and support, to wound all his sensibilities, by neglecting to afford him countenance while he is engaged in presenting the fruit of his toil? Surely, these things ought not so to be.

of this, or any preceding age. They contain the writer's maturest thoughts, on one of the most difficult questions ever presented to the mind of man; and that question obtains in these pages the most searching and profound investigation, aided by a competent acquaintance with all the accessible disquisitions of previous writers on the same subject, and illumined by each ray of light which could be brought to bear upon it from holy Scripture. And yet, deep and thorough as are the author's examinations,—clear, and full, and conclusive, as are his statements, and arguments, and reasonings,—with a modesty, and humility, and candour which never forsook him, he thus speaks of this fruit of his labours:—

“Aware of the indefinite, and in some cases—as the Author conceives—false conceptions which prevail, even among Evangelical Christians, of the nature or essence of original depravity, he is prepared to expect that certain positions maintained in this volume may not at present secure universal acceptance. He does not wish any one to admit them, without personal conviction of their truth. The faith of the reader should stand, not on human authority, but Divine. All he ventures to ask is, that those into whose hands this book may fall, will give to its statements a careful and candid examination. If he might presume so far, he would venture to suggest that those statements should be considered and judged of as a whole. Unless the Writer deceives himself, it will be found that the various portions of the volume unfold and defend different parts of a system of truth, each of which should of course be viewed in its relation to every other part, and to the whole, and to the truth and importance of the whole; and that the admission of one of its great principles will necessarily lead to the admission of the entire system. Let it be conceded, for instance, that the gifts deposited with Adam were ‘chartered benefits,’ and chartered benefits exclusively, and the Author will dismiss all apprehension in reference to the ultimate reception of the entire system he has felt himself compelled to advocate.”

To furnish anything like an analysis of the contents of this important volume would be out of place in the brief space assigned to this memoir; nor can I persuade myself to speak of the ability displayed in the work, in such terms as would fully express my own convictions, lest I should be suspected of partiality, and be charged with exaggeration. I therefore avail myself of the remarks of a writer far more competent to form an accurate judgment of such a production than I can possibly pretend to be; and with his estimate of its worth, I commend the volume to the serious attention of the reader of these pages. Dr. Campbell says as follows:—

"The present is the greatest undertaking for which the writer has yet begirded himself; and the result, we apprehend, even surpasses his previous performances. Never man, we think, came to it with greater or more numerous advantages, and with higher probabilities of success. Everything was in his favour; a mind created, we might almost say, for moral and metaphysical disquisition, of great grasp and comprehension, clear as an Italian sky, cool as the air of Nova Zembla, intimately conversant with the philosophy of language—a great point in such a controversy,—and that mind in the full maturity of years, without a particle of their infirmity; a spirit highly philosophical; a taste thoroughly evangelical; a candour unsullied by a single stain; and a patience that would have fitted its possessor for labour in the mines;—these are some of the qualifications brought to the work, and some of the grounds which entitle the writer to a more than ordinary measure of attention. Of the bright roll of names referred to in his pages, Knapp, Dwight, Edwards, Williams, Beecher, Hopkins, Price, Hartley, Doddridge, Russell, Watson, Wigger, Horsley, Tholuck, Fuller, Dick, Stuart, Taylor, Bellamy, Watts, Hill, Spring, Reid, Chalmers, Ware, Balmer, and Ballantyne, there were not more than three—Edwards, Williams, and Fuller—in whose hands, all things considered, the subject might have had an equal chance of justice. These considerations may well excite some degree of expectation, and that expectation will be inordinate if, on perusal, it is disappointed. We do not affirm that the dread abyss has been fully sounded, and its depth, at length, fairly ascertained. It is enough to say, that the light of the knowledge of the subject has received a large accession; that error, where least suspected, has been discovered and exposed; that true mental philosophy and sound theology, by their combined powers, have adjusted and harmonized great principles which had previously presented an aspect of confusion and contradiction; and that this is by far the most satisfactory view of the subject that has yet been given to the world."

Early in 1845, Dr. Payne published a letter to Sir Culling E. Smith (now Sir Culling E. Eardley), on the subject of the Maynooth Endowment Bill, which I find referred to in the body of an article in the *Eclectic Review*, in May of that year. The respected Baronet, at my request, has caused diligent search to be



made for a copy of this pamphlet, but without success; nor have I been able to procure one from any other quarter. The gist of the document, however, I apprehend is contained in the subjoined paragraph, quoted in the *Eclectic*; and which I put upon record here as the last published opinion of my friend on a point which he held with a tenacious grasp, and from which he felt no one could dislodge him, who was willing to allow the authority of Scripture in the decision of the question. The Reviewer says,—“Dr. Payne’s admirable letter to Sir Culling Eardley Smith has set the duty of Dissenters in its true light. It is at once clear and compact, temperate and decided, just such an exposition of the case as the interests of truth required. The following concluding passage sums up and applies his argument” :—

“Now you, Sir Culling, call upon Sir Robert Peel to act as a minister—to decide what is true and false in religion as a minister—and to give support (for I imagine that your principle implies this) or withhold support as a minister. By requiring us not to petition against the grant, on dissenting principles, you take from us the only consistent ground on which, as Dissenters, we can petition,—the only ground on which, even Churchmen are now beginning to see, any consistent petition can rest. So strongly do I feel the inconsistency and the danger of the course you recommend, that, if I did not know you to be a friend—an able, warm-hearted friend—I should mistake you for an enemy. Greatly do I marvel to find, in your letter, a reference to the constitution of our country, and to hear you saying that it pronounces a certain system of faith to be false and dangerous! What, if it does? Is that, to a Dissenter, a sufficient reason even for *personal* action against it? And yet you seem to plead it as a reason for *Government* action!”

I must now briefly advert to some matters in which Dr. Payne was much interested, and which led to his removal, and that of the Western Academy, from Exeter; only premising that the circumstances which rendered this step expedient were not, in anywise, attributable to the honoured and effective President of the Institution, but arose from other and extraneous sources.

“For some years past,” says a printed account now before me, “to the no small discredit of our denomination, the annual subscriptions to the Academy have been falling off, while its funded property has been gradually decreased.” This being the case, it

was felt necessary, by all parties concerned, to institute inquiry; and hence several special Committee meetings were held in the autumn of 1844, and anxious and protracted examinations and discussions were entered into. The results of these are embodied in the following paragraph from the Report for 1845-6. "Previously to the annual meeting in 1845, a conviction had been gradually gaining ground among the Subscribers, that the removal of the Institution from Exeter was desirable; and the supporters of the College in its immediate neighbourhood distinctly stated that, unless this measure was adopted, it would be impossible for the Institution to continue in existence for more than one or two sessions at the furthest."

At the annual meeting adverted to in this paragraph, and held in June 1845, the minutes of the special Committee meetings were brought up and read, the whole case was reviewed, and the following resolutions unanimously passed:—"That this meeting feels called upon to place the Western College in more favourable circumstances, and to carry on its operations with increased efficiency." "That in the judgment of this meeting, it is desirable that the Academy be removed to another locality, and that that locality be Plymouth or its neighbourhood." "That it be a recommendation to the Committee from this meeting, that they take immediate steps for carrying into effect the foregoing resolution; and that they take into early consideration the character of the Education which shall be hereafter afforded in this Institution, and the papers which were read at the College Conference, held in London in January last, and report their opinion thereon to the special general meeting, which they may call when they deem it desirable to do so." "That this meeting, sensible of the valued services of the much-esteemed Tutors, the Rev. Drs. Payne and Dobbin, desires hereby to express its confidence in them; and its grateful estimate of the attention and ability they have invariably devoted to the interests of the Institution."

In consequence of the foregoing instructions, the Committee engaged suitable premises for the purposes of the College, in a convenient position, about equi-distant from the towns of Plymouth and Devonport; and hither Dr. Payne, with his family, and the students, removed at Christmas 1845.

## SECTION VII.

## REMOVAL TO PLYMOUTH, DECLINING HEALTH, AND DEATH.

IN the discussion and settlement of the questions which resulted in fixing the Western College in the neighbourhood of Plymouth, Dr. Payne did not interfere. But after that point had been decided by the Subscribers, he was much engaged in the deliberations which ensued upon the several arrangements necessary to be made previous to the commencement of operations in the locality which had been selected. The general course of study, to be distributed over a period of five years, was at length determined; and it was resolved that, on account of the peculiar circumstances of the West of England, the College should be also open to young men of ability and piety, whom it might not be expedient to conduct through the entire course, and that, in their case, the term of residence should be limited to three years. A successor to Dr. Dobbin, in the Classical and Mathematical Professorship, was secured,—the Rev. Samuel Newth, M.A., Fellow of University College, London, having accepted an invitation to that department; and to relieve Dr. P. of a portion of his responsibilities, a separate residence was provided for him and his family, and the domestic arrangements of the Institution were confided to Mr. and Mrs. Newth.

Matters being thus adjusted, the College session was opened in January 1846, with eight students, three having come from Exeter, and five being admitted at Plymouth. To these, additions were subsequently made; so that, during the two years and a half which intervened between this period and Dr. P.'s death, he had full occupation in his honoured and beloved employment; besides being engaged, often as opportunities occurred, in preaching for his brethren, and on more public occasions in the several pulpits of these towns, and in the neighbourhood.

The improved condition of the Collegiate establishment yielded him unfeigned delight; and in his esteemed colleague he found not only an able coadjutor, but a steady and affectionate friend. They laboured together with great cordiality; the young men made satisfactory progress under their judicious and effective guidance: and

between them and the several Committees of Management confidence and harmony continued unbroken. In the College, therefore, he had abundant reason for consolation and joy; but there were other circumstances which awakened anxiety. The illness of Mrs. Payne increased greatly: his own health suffered; and though he was not laid aside from active duty, it was manifest that he was becoming enfeebled, and ready to bow beneath the weight of his infirmities and labours. Added to this, he had to encounter all the changes incident to a removal to a new location. During a residence of seventeen years in Exeter, he had formed many associations of a gratifying character. These were now left behind, and opportunities of accustomed intercourse, by reason of distance, cut off. In the neighbourhood of his present abode, he had, among the resident ministers, two or three familiar and long-trying friends; and in the churches and congregations, there were several gentlemen with whom he possessed previous acquaintance, in consequence of their attendance on Committee meetings at Exeter, and in other ways, all of whom endeavoured to secure his personal comfort;—still, he felt, for the most part, as though he was in a land of strangers, and at his time of life, when more than sixty years had flown, it was no easy thing to form new and congenial intimacies. Friendship is a plant of slow growth, and requires long time, and many manifestations of sympathetic interest, to render it firm, and make it valuable. He refers to this in his letter to Dr. Wardlaw, under date of February 2nd, 1848;\* and what is there stated I am able to confirm, having known all that belonged to his position, and something of his feelings in regard to this matter. Yet he never mentioned these things in a complaining tone; when he spoke of them, it was only as constituting some of those trials of life ordered by a gracious Providence, to wean his heart more entirely from sublunary enjoyments, and to perfect his meetness for the heavenly world. He submitted to their disciplinary influence, and looked for complete happiness in an unchanging clime.

Nor did he, notwithstanding his own occasional ailments, and the deeper affliction of his beloved wife, forsake his study, nor wholly lay aside his literary avocations. Generally, when I called upon him, after the labours of the lecture-room had closed, I found

him in his cherished seclusion, preparing statements of his opinions on the public questions of the day, or writing a review of some recent publication, or otherwise employing his pen in endeavours to instruct and improve mankind. At these times, the topic which had engaged his attention on my entering usually became the subject of discourse; from which we sometimes glided to family and personal affairs, and other matters in which he happened to be interested, and of which he spoke freely and with affectionate solicitude. Nothing but gratification arose on my part from our discussions, so clear-headed, and candid, and full of information was he; and to withhold sympathy from him, in other concerns, was impossible, for he was sure to win it by his tenderness of spirit, as well as by his overflowing benevolence and piety.

In the month of April, this year, the annual meeting of the South Devon Congregational Union was held in this locality, when Dr. P. consented to preach the association sermon, and was subsequently induced, by the unanimous vote of the Assembly, to commit it to the press. It is entitled—"The Nature and Means of Religious Revivals, exhibited in a Discourse delivered before the Members of the South Devon Congregational Union, at their Annual Meeting, at Stonehouse, April the 28th, 1846, and published at their request." The text is Psalm lxxv. 6; and the subject is divided into two parts:—"I. The sense which should be attached to the phrase, a revival of religion; and—II. The means which should be employed to promote it." This sermon is, I believe, scarcely known beyond the southern district of Devon; for the printed copies were taken by the ministers and deacons, in parcels of fifty or one hundred each, for distribution among their respective congregations. It merits a much wider circulation; and I should be happy to see it republished, if not in its separate form, yet in the pages of some one of our periodicals. A few sentences will suffice to show the spirit which pervades this admirable discourse, and its practical tendency.

"Another means of securing a revival of religion among us, will be found to be the acting out of holy principles, and desires, and affections, in holy conduct,—an embodying of what we feel in what we do, so that the inner man may appear in the outer man, and the grace of God in the heart may become visible to the eye of sense. The necessary limits of one discourse render any

general illustration of this remark impossible. I can scarcely do more than remind you of the great general law of the mind, that the way to strengthen a principle or feeling of any kind is to act it out. The man who acts liberally becomes more liberal. The man who acts covetously becomes more covetous, till at length, in some cases, he crawls before us in all the wretchedness, and rags, and filth of a miser,—a spectacle contemned of men and abhorred of God, but at which devils clank their chains in exultation.

“All the principles of the new nature, those pure and heavenly affections which constitute the very essence of religion, come under the dominion and influence of this great law of the mind. Self-renunciation, self-denial, dependence upon God, love to the Saviour, love to the brethren, love to the entire human family,—all of these are strengthened by being brought into action. \* \* \* \* \* The spectacle is singularly beautiful, when a church, with the deacons and pastor, feel that they have something more to do than to secure their own edification,—that God has placed them in the position they occupy that they may become the source of light, and life, and joy, to all within the reach of their influence;—the sight is singularly beautiful, where the whole body, under the direction of the Head of the body, are, as we familiarly say, up and doing,—where every one has something to do, and is doing it,—something calculated to promote the prosperity of the church, and its usefulness, by turning sinners from the errors of their ways, and bringing them into the fold of Christ.”

An Ordination Service occurred in the following September, at Liskeard, in Cornwall; to which he went, accompanied by several of his brethren, and most of the students, and in which he took part. Several circumstances conspired to give to this occasion an unusual amount of interest. No Ordination among Independents had taken place at Liskeard, or in the district around, for many years;—the minister about to be set apart was a young man of considerable promise;—he had studied at the University of Aberdeen, and afterwards with the Rev. J. Frost, of Cotton End, Bedfordshire,—possessed great piety, talent, and amiability of disposition, and had been much blessed in his labours;—the drooping interest had revived, and there was every appearance of a still larger increase; so that anticipations were indulged of a new and more commodious chapel being soon required.\* Dr.

\* Alas! that such hopes should have been disappointed. But so it was. In a little more than twelve months after his Ordination, this beloved young minister, the Rev. H. McKay, was obliged, from the failure of his health, to leave his charge, and retire to the parental abode. Here he lingered, under all the distressing manifestations of pulmonary disease, till the 6th of April, 1849; and then meekly resigned his spirit, and departed to his eternal rest.

Payne entered into these anticipations with great cordiality, and gladly afforded his valuable countenance and help. He preached, on this occasion, the Introductory Discourse, which was printed with the other services under the following title:—"Discourses delivered at the Ordination of the Rev. Hugh McKay, over the Independent Church and Congregation, at Liskeard, in Cornwall, on Tuesday, September 29th, 1846. A Preparatory Address by the Rev. T. C. Hine, of Plymouth;—the Introductory Discourse by the Rev. George Payne, LL.D., of the Western College;—the Charge by the Rev. John Pyer, of Devonport;—the Sermon to the People by the Rev. Eliezer Jones, of Plymouth;—together with the Pastor's Confession of Faith, &c. :—published at the request of the Church and Congregation." Much of holy fervour characterized the several services; great blessedness was experienced by the multitude gathered from the town, and various portions of the county; and with the several important engagements Dr. Payne expressed unfeigned satisfaction and delight. Often did he, subsequently, refer to this season as the one, of all the Ordination Services he had ever attended, in which he had enjoyed the most of unmingled and halloved pleasure. His own spirit, speech, and entire deportment, throughout these days, as well as in going and returning, impressed the hearts of his brethren, and discovered, in him, signs of gracious ripening for the purity and felicity of the heavenly world. The "Introductory Discourse" which he delivered is very valuable, as a cogent argument for the obligation devolved upon every man to ascertain the ground on which he bases his religious faith and practice, and a clear exhibition of dissenting "principles and polity;" and a sort of sacredness belongs to it as among the last efforts of his pen, and certainly the last published sermon in which he embodied his testimony in favour of Congregational Independency.\*

\* The Discourses above mentioned are published by J. Snow, London. It would be out of place for me to attempt further to characterize them; but I may, possibly, be forgiven, if I present in this note opinions expressed by others; and if I know my own heart, the motive which prompts me to this is a desire to do good to the readers of these pages, by commending to their attention statements of truth which may, under God's blessing, promote their benefit.

"We could fervently wish that these admirable Discourses were widely circulated among our churches. They are distinguished by no ordinary share of useful and prac-

In October, the autumnal assembly of the Congregational Union of England and Wales was convened in these towns; and no one was more delighted than Dr. Payne to bid his brethren welcome, and to interchange with them tokens of recognition and delightful sympathy, or to take part in promoting the different objects of interest which claimed attention. On the first day devoted to public business, after dinner, Alfred Roker, Esq., one of the Secretaries of the Western College, was permitted to present to the meeting a statement and an appeal in its behalf. The reading of this document called up various gentlemen, and, among the rest, the Rev. Thomas Binney, Dr. Vaughan, Dr. Campbell, and Josiah Conder, Esq., all of whom, in the course of their addresses, made touching and delightful reference to Dr. Payne. The strain of their remarks was eulogistic of his ability, diligence, devotedness to his work as a Tutor, and of the service rendered by his writings to the cause of truth and righteousness;—yet not more complimentary than true, and quite befitting the occasion, as was felt and manifested in the hearty and repeated response of the whole assembly. But it was too much for the sensitive nature of the devout and humble-minded individual who was the subject of these sincere and well-intentioned laudations. The whole thing was unexpected—perfectly spontaneous,—and, consequently, the more affecting and overpowering. The good man, taken by surprise, was astonished—confused—overwhelmed. He long struggled with his emotions,—then the tears stood in his eyes,—they chased each other down his cheeks,—to restrain them was impossible,—they burst into a flood,—his head bowed,—it was buried in his hands; and when he was looked for to rise and respond, he was sobbing aloud, and dared not attempt an address in reply. At the close of the meeting, he endeavoured to relieve his oppressed feelings by personal expressions of gratitude; and many times, afterward, did he advert to the scene as one of the most painfully-

tical suggestion; and might be read by thousands of our church-members with great advantage: indeed, we know not when we have seen a pamphlet more deserving of being made a permanent tract.”—*Evangelical Magazine*.

“Where all is so excellent, it is useless to specify. Since the Ordination Services of the Rev. John Kelly, of Liverpool, we have met with nothing of the sort so complete, and so valuable. It is the best shilling’s worth of the kind in existence.”—*Christian Witness*.



pleasant of his whole life. ' He warmed not with the praise, nor swelled with the encomiums bestowed, but confessed that he had no idea till then that he stood so high in his brethren's esteem; and to find himself the object of so much love and veneration, on the part of men occupying stations of such deserved eminence in the denomination, and in the church generally, was the thing, as he said, which filled with inexpressible emotion his almost bursting heart.

The winter passed without any very material alteration in the state of his health, or in that of his beloved wife; but early in the following spring, Mrs. Payne became alarmingly ill. For some time her life hung in doubt, and her children were summoned to attend what was imagined to be her dying-bed. He adverts to this in the following note addressed to the Rev. Evan Davies.

PLYMOUTH, *April 6th*, 1847.

My dear Davies,

Your very pleasant letter arrived on the very day on which my poor wife became so alarmingly ill. For about ten days she was trembling between life and death,—all her children, in this country, around her, expecting almost every hour to be the last; and, though she has revived a little, and immediate danger has passed away, the supposed state of the lungs forbids the hope that she will be spared to us much longer. She has been (and continues) very calm and happy,—firmly trusting in that Almighty Friend who, she says, has never yet deserted her, and who she believes never will. She is willing to wait God's time for her release, but is desirous to depart, and to be at rest. My hope is a little reviving, that the alarming symptoms may not altogether have arisen from permanent malady. A short time will, however, decide. \* \* \* All here join in love to all with you—with

Yours very affectionately,

GEORGE PAYNE.

For a time the progress of disease was arrested, and he fondly hoped that his endeared partner might be spared for some time longer; for, amidst all her sufferings, her spirits never gave way, and her cheerfulness remained unsubdued. These hopes, however, were frustrated. As the summer approached and passed, she gradually grew weaker, and it became more and more evident that she could not long survive. Her passage to the tomb was carefully watched, and everything, which medical skill and relative affection could accomplish, was done to mitigate her physical pain, and soothe

her spirit in this last stage of her earthly sorrows. At length the hour of release arrived, and she was taken to the mansions of the blessed, on Monday, October 25th, 1847. The funeral was conducted on the following Saturday; and thus by an undesigned, and, at the moment, an unthought-of coincidence, all that was mortal of the beloved one was committed to the grave on the anniversary of her wedding-day,—she having been married October 30th, 1807, just forty years before.

This painful bereavement he felt most acutely; yet he bowed to the appointment of his Lord with unrepining submission, as is evidenced in the following letter written, to Dr. Burder, the day after his wife's death.

PLYMOUTH, 26th October, 1847.

My very dear Friend,

I feel impelled, by the recollection of the long friendship which has subsisted between us, to make you aware of our loss. My dear wife fell asleep in Christ yesterday evening. She had been gradually sinking for several weeks. On Monday morning, what I felt to be the cold dew of death was upon her! She sank lower and lower; the pulse feebler and feebler, till at length we observed it ceased to beat, and she went to rest without a struggle.

She has had no fear of death. Her faith and confidence were strong; and she spoke of dying as if it were removing from one room to another; as indeed it is.

My first feeling has been thankfulness for her gain. I expect my second will be that of sad and dreary desolation. However, God is mighty and gracious. I will trust in him. *I do not expect to be long behind.* I have, in every sense, less to live for. I am thankful that she has been taken *before me*. May God bless to me and mine this trial! In her state of suffering, I could not wish her to live; and I would not, for her sake, ask her back again.

I am, my dear Friend,

• Very affectionately yours,

GEORGE PAYNE.

On the morning of the day after the funeral, it being the Sabbath, he occupied the pulpit of George-Street Chapel, Plymouth, and delivered an affecting discourse from 1 Thess. iv. 18, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." The sermon appeared in the Supplement to the *Evangelical Magazine* for 1847; and some copies were struck off separately for private distribution, to which he appended a few sentences, as follows:—

"The substance of the preceding paragraphs was delivered in George-

Street Chapel, Plymouth, the day after the funeral of Mrs. Eleanor Payne, by her sorrowing yet rejoicing husband :—*sorrowing* on account of his own irreparable loss,—the loss of one who deserved, and who had secured his warmest love,—the tender and faithful partner of his joys and sorrows for nearly forty years ;—*rejoicing* in the full assurance that *his* loss is her gain,—the great and blessed Being who had redeemed and sanctified her, and made her meet for glory, having taken her to be with himself, which is far better.”

His position and feelings, a few weeks later, is affectingly touched upon in the subjoined note to his friend Davies.

PLYMOUTH, *December 16th*, 1847.

My dear Brother,

My eyes and head have been in so sad a state of late, that I have been obliged to defer correspondence, and, indeed, everything I could defer. We are greatly obliged by your kind sympathy, and that of your dear wife. The blow is indeed to me an irreparable one, but I hope I can say the will of the Lord be done.

My health is, in my own view of it, unsatisfactory. I apprehend organic affection. The doctor says he sees no evidence of it, but the affection remains. I hope, however, that recent measures have in some degree mitigated it. My incomparable Sarah—almost as incomparable as your own wife—is with me, and will not leave me till she leaves finally.

I sometimes think, what shall I do when forsaken by both? Dear girls, they are very kind; but I could not think of keeping them with me to prevent or delay their settlement. I find, however, I must not think about this. Perhaps, by that time I may have rejoined my beloved partner. Sarah desires affectionate regards to both, with

Dear Brother,

Ever yours,

GEORGE PAYNE.

About this time he was requested to visit Scotland, early in the following year, as the delegate from the Congregational Union of England and Wales, to the Scottish Congregational Union. But it was doubtful whether the state of his health would allow of his taking this journey, and he greatly hesitated in his decision respecting it. Before, however, the appointed period arrived, he found himself somewhat better, and engaged to discharge the duty. On his way to the North, he called at Southampton, preached and collected for the College, and then journeyed by London to Edinburgh. Some very interesting recollections connected with this visit are supplied by Dr. Wardlaw, in his

"Reminiscences," p. cl., &c.,—to which I would refer the reader's attention; and to these I shall add two or three other particulars.

The Rev. J. R. Campbell, the present minister of Albany Chapel, Edinburgh, says,—“I recollect, with a melancholy pleasure, his visit to us in Edinburgh, in April 1848. There was a chastened solemnity of tone, and high spirituality of sentiment, in his ministrations. He seemed to feel much as a father who had called his children around his dying-bed, and felt that he should see them no more in the flesh. I almost feel the pressure of his hand upon my shoulder, when, in the midst of a few select friends gathered together, he committed his old flock to me, and me to the flock, with a prayer for our common welfare.”

His beloved daughter Sarah accompanied him to Scotland, and supplies me with the following remarks,—“It was my great privilege and joy to be my dear father's companion during the last few months of his life. He seemed to be preparing for the happy change, which was his gain but our sad loss; he was so gentle and tender in all he said and did. It was not *what* he said, so much as the mild and affectionate manner in which he said it, that made an impression. His visit to Scotland was the source of much mingled feeling. His delight in meeting many dear and revered friends was softened by the discovery of many changes, and the consciousness that that was his last interview with them on this side the grave. Some relatives we called upon on our way home were much struck with his manner, and have since told me how forcibly they were impressed with the belief that he was very near heaven.”

Having returned to his abode in peace, he resumed his wonted labours in the College, and pursued them without interruption from illness; though it was too evident, by the acute sufferings he endured, that his constitution was giving way, and that, instead of toiling as was his wont, he ought rather to be seeking retirement and repose. But he could not be idle. Long as he had a mind to think, a tongue to speak, and a hand to write, he must be doing his Master's work. During the last few weeks of his earthly sojourn, he wrote several articles for the press on theological subjects;—one, on “Our Lord's Temptation in the Wilderness,” appeared in the January number of the *Evangelical Magazine* for this year (1848); another, on “Practical Results of certain Views

of the Atonement," in the number for June; and a Reply to some Strictures on the former topic was printed in that for July. These, however, and all his other labours, were drawing to a close. The conviction that his health was failing fast, and his energy yielding to the presence of disease, obtruded itself upon those who were in habits of familiar intercourse with him, and was also shared and spoken of by the brethren from the South of Devon, who, on the first days of May, were assembled in the town of Devonport, at the annual meeting of the South Devon Congregational Union. His altered appearance was noticed, and his manifest feebleness remarked upon with deep and sympathetic concern. Similar convictions and apprehensions it seems had entered his own mind. Towards the end of the month, the ministers who had been educated by him, and the students still under his care, united in presenting him with a splendid portrait of himself, and a purse of gold, as an expression of their high respect for his character as a Christian and a Theological Professor, and of the affection they cherished toward him as their beloved and honoured Tutor. He was greatly affected with this appropriate and spontaneous manifestation of kindness, and, addressing those who bore the memorial into his presence, he thanked them in tender and melting strains, expressed his deep interest in their welfare,—and then said that "he was feeling more and more the infirmities of age, that he was sometimes afraid he should be wholly laid aside, and that he wished (if he might be allowed to express the wish), if it pleased God, that he might be taken to heaven as soon as he had finished his Master's work; for he dreaded nothing more than being debarred the privilege of active service."

Just a week before he went to his reward in the skies, he attended the ministers' breakfast-meeting, usually held on the second Monday in each month in these towns. This was on the 12th of June, and it so happened that the meeting was held at my house. A few days previous, two young ladies, who had been placed under my daughter's care, had arrived from Edinburgh, and were now part of my family. Always glad to see any one from Scotland, and finding that they knew some of his former friends in that city, he entered into conversation with them about these parties and their families, and became more animated than

any of us had observed him to have been for a long time before. In fact, he was so delightfully absorbed that it became necessary many times to remind him that he was neglecting his necessary refreshment, and that he had better reserve himself, as other opportunities would be afforded for pursuing the topics on which he had entered with such manifest pleasure. When our repast was finished, I requested him to conduct family worship. The Scriptures were read, and then, with more than usual fervour, he poured out supplications to God, especially pleading, with much of tender affection, for his brethren, and the churches under their pastoral care; for the family; for his Scotch friends; for the growth of religion in this locality, and its extension throughout the earth. In the ministerial converse which followed he took his full share, and evinced throughout unwonted cheerfulness of spirit. Before we separated, he consented to preach for me the following Lord's day evening, as I had engaged to supply the pulpit at Totness, then vacant by the recent removal of my valued friend, the Rev. W. Tarbotton, to Limerick. The same afternoon I journeyed, with the Rev. Eliezer Jones, to Kingsbridge, where we had, the next day, to preach anniversary sermons. As we rode along, our venerated friend formed a principal subject of our conversation. We had both observed his unusual animation in the morning, the fervid breathings of his devout spirit, and his affectionate tenderness. We had also marked his sunken cheek, the pallid hue of his countenance, the diminished lustre of his eye; and expressed to each other our mutual apprehensions that, in all probability, we should shortly be called to mourn over his removal. •

The week passed, and he went through all his duties in the lecture-room without interruption, and with more than usual vivacity. On the Saturday, after he left the College, he finished, and sent to the Editor of the *Evangelical Magazine*, the last paper he ever wrote for the press, being an article on the "Assurance of Salvation," which appeared in the August number of that periodical. The next evening he was in my pulpit, in Mount-Street Chapel, Devonport, and preached with peculiar energy and unction, from 1 John. iv. 8, "God is love;" and in the course of his sermon expressed his desire to dwell upon the glorious theme with his *dying breath*. Many pious people who listened to that discourse have

since told me, that on no previous occasion did he seem to preach with so much of holy fervour, and power, and impressiveness, as he did on that evening. On retiring to the vestry, however, he was quite exhausted. It was proposed to send for a carriage to take him home, but he declined;—my daughter, after a while, renewed the request; still he refused, saying he should be better when he had rested a little, and be quite able to walk to his abode. He tarried a short time, and then, taking his daughter's arm, left and proceeded homeward. But it was a toilsome journey, and he was obliged to halt several times by the way to recover his failing breath. On arriving at his own house, he complained of pain in the chest, though in other respects, he said, he felt easier. It was suggested that his medical adviser should be sent for; but this he steadily refused. Mr. Clarke, the senior student, being present, he requested him to conduct family worship, and desired his daughter to read the chapter from which he had that evening taken his text, adding—"The love of God is such a delightful theme." He sat for some time conversing with Mr. Clarke and his daughter, and remarked that "he had never preached with so much pleasure as he had experienced that night,—that although he felt very poorly on his way to the chapel, yet when he began to preach all his pain and weakness seemed to have forsaken him." After partaking some slight refreshment he retired to rest, and the following morning, not having made his appearance at his usual hour, his bed-room was entered, and it was discovered that his spirit had been translated to those regions of light and purity where dwells that glorious Lord God Almighty, the manifestations of whose love he had been unfolding and commending to his fellow-men only a few hours before, and, as it now proved to have been, with his *dying breath*. This event occurred on the 19th of June, 1848, when he was in the sixty-seventh year of his age.

The next day the Executive Committee was called together, when the subjoined resolution was passed, and recorded on the minutes.

"The Executive Committee of the Western College, assembled on the sudden translation of the Rev. Dr. Payne from his labours on earth to his heavenly reward, cannot proceed to the duties claiming their attention until they have recorded a testimony of their affectionate esteem for his character and worth.

"During the period of twenty years, in which this Institution was privileged and blessed by his official connection with it, as Theological Tutor, he laboured zealously and unremittingly for the improvement of the students committed to his charge; and by the appliance of his clear, profound, discriminating apprehension of scriptural doctrine, combined with the aid of mental and moral science, in which he was deeply skilled, he led them into all truth; while by his meekness, humility, and devout piety, he continually presented to them an example worthy of their imitation.

"The Executive Committee deeply feel that, personally, they have lost a most sincere and affectionate friend—the Western College a most learned and devoted professor—and the church of Christ a most laborious and useful minister; yet they desire meekly to bow to this dispensation of an infinitely-wise, merciful, and faithful God, and to rejoice that their dear departed friend was called away, while the vigour of his mind was yet unimpaired, and amidst active engagement in the service of his Divine Master, from the duties, cares, and conflicts of the church on earth, to the rest, the reward, and the glory of the church in heaven.

"The Committee sympathize with the sorrows of the bereaved family of their beloved friend, and devoutly pray that they may be sustained by the Divine Arm, and be followers of him who now 'through faith and patience inherits the promises.'"

The funeral took place on Tuesday, June 27th, and, in addition to the members of his family, was attended by his respected colleague, the students, the College Committee, by all his ministerial brethren in the three towns, and many others from a distance; together with several Baptist and Wesleyan ministers, and a large number of gentlemen of the neighbourhood, and from various parts of Devon and Cornwall. The Rev. Messrs. Bristow, Jones, Newth, Nicholson, and Christopher, conducted devotional exercises, and the Rev. Dr. Burder delivered an address; after which his mortal remains were deposited in the same grave where rests those of his beloved wife, in the burying-ground of Emma-Place Chapel, Stonehouse, there to await the resurrection of the just.

The following evening Dr. Burder preached his funeral sermon, in the same pulpit in which, ten days before, he closed his public labours. The sermon was printed in the *Evangelical Magazine* for August, 1848.



## SECTION VIII.

## SUMMARY OF CHARACTER.

WITH the closing sentence of the last section, I should have laid aside my pen, and left the foregoing imperfect sketch to the consideration of those who may peruse these pages, did I not imagine that it is possible, perhaps, by a few consecutive observations, to place the character of Dr. Payne, as a whole, more distinctly before the reader's eye. And this, as it appears to me, is desirable, forasmuch as he was not known personally, even in the denomination to which he belonged, beyond a comparatively limited range. Thousands have read his works who never saw his face; for his was, for the most part, a secluded path; and it was only by those who were familiar with his daily behaviour in the College, the study, and the family, that his life and habits, in their entire complexion, could be properly estimated. From his writings, certain conclusions may be drawn as to his powers of mind and acquirements; but these do not exhibit him in all those manifestations, and relations, and particular developments of thought, and feeling, and disposition, which, viewed in their combination, and in connection with his published sentiments, go to make up the character of the man.

Besides, in his case, there was nothing of a showy and specious description to attract attention,—all was solid and judicious, but withal quiet and retiring. He never thrust himself forward, or pushed for notoriety, or sought what is commonly called popularity; nor was there anything extravagant or exaggerated about what he either did or said in any part of his career. To be brilliant, to dazzle, to surprise men, was not his ambition; but to be holy, and devout, and useful. He was content to keep an even and secluded course,—to pursue the “noiseless tenor of his way,” rising upon mankind in silence like the orb of day, and yet, like the sun, shedding light and heat upon all who came within the sphere of his influence. To be good and to do good was, in his estimation, of higher importance, and more to be coveted, than to be renowned for the largest possessions of wit, or the profoundest displays of intellectual greatness. I remember to have heard him, when in-

sisting on the superiority of holiness over mere power of mind, in a charge at the ordination of a young minister, cite the example of the Saviour, and inquire, with marked emphasis,—“Notwithstanding all the glorious things which Christ said, who ever thinks of Jesus of Nazareth as a man of talent? And why? but because of that piety which, in him, eclipsed every other excellence!” And yet, Dr. Payne never undervalued mental ability. He rejoiced in its existence, wherever he found it,—highly respected it in others,—and had, and wielded no mean share of it himself.

I have heard it said, indeed, by some, that he was destitute of *genius*; and if by this somewhat ambiguous term is meant a bold, creative fancy,—a soaring, exuberant imagination, enabling its possessor to revel amidst a host of tropes and figures, and to present them instinct with life and radiant in beauty,—why then, he had it not, at least not in any remarkable degree;—but if genius be the possession of superior mental faculties, and the ability to use them with conscious power, and telling effect,—why then, he had genius, and that of no common order. If he could not originate images, he could produce new ideas; if he could not marshal figures, he could put forth wise and profound thoughts; if he could not illumine with a flash, he could ratiocinate till he evolved truth in its native loveliness, and stripped of every disguise; if he could not paint a picture, he could show, with unfailing accuracy, where each line of light, and every stroke of shade should be.

That his mind was capable of independent and original action his works amply prove. He could not be the servile imitator of any man; nor could he admit any theory, nor consent to any opinion, unless he perceived, and made himself sure, that it was consonant with truth. Hence, in his work on “Mental and Moral Science,” though he followed for the most part the teachings of Dr. Thomas Brown, whose powers as a philosopher he vastly admired, yet he thoroughly scrutinized and sifted all that he admitted, rejected whatever he deemed fallacious, and in some of the most important points struck out for himself, and pursued a totally diverse and independent path. Perhaps, acuteness of perception, power of analysis, and ingenuity of research, were the most striking features of Dr. Payne’s mental conformation. He could see into the lowest depths of an argument as clearly as any man; and he could analyze and

distinguish all its parts, detecting the minutest flaw wheresoever it might be. It has often struck me, that between him and my revered friend, the late Rev. Dr. McAll, there was, in this respect, very great resemblance; and, on the principle that "like loves like," I have been confirmed in the conclusion by the admiration he entertained of Dr. M.'s metaphysical cast of mind, with which he became acquainted by his intercourse with him during his residence in Lancashire. Not that I mean by this reference to intimate other resemblances in the minds of these two great and good men. Dr. M., in addition to metaphysical acumen, had a poetic soul,—a soul that delighted and felt itself at home in the gorgeous, and glowing, and grand; so that he could throw around his ideas, or rather, his ideas burst forth in coruscations of light, and groups of splendid imagery. Moreover, he would place before you all that was in his mind without any apparent effort, and pour out volumes of wisdom, and of beautiful illustration, with all the ease, and force, and majesty of a full, flowing tide. Hence, I have often thought, while listening to his public discourses, or conversing with him, both in the social circle and alone, that he seemed to possess knowledge intuitively, and to give it forth without any perceptible exertion. Dr. Payne had little or nothing of this. His acuteness wrought more silently, and slowly, and with less of adornment; still not with less of certainty, for he compassed similar objects, and produced similar results. They both unravelled metaphysical intricacies; but the one did so immediately, without the seeming trouble of reasoning;—the other by means of gradual explorations. The one did it by a stroke,—the other by a process. The one beheld, as by inspiration, the point necessary to be ascertained,—the other approached it by selected steps. The one plunged to the bottom of an argument by an instantaneous dive,—the other found it by cautious and repeated soundings. The researches of the one revelled amidst the creations of an almost boundless fancy,—the reasonings of the other were simple deductions from clearly-understood premises. Capable and critical, therefore, as Dr. Payne undoubtedly was, his mind, both from nature and habit, was, comparatively, slow and purely ratiocinative in its evolutions.

But much as his mental structure fitted and enabled him to explore the regions of metaphysical research, Theology was his fa-

avourite study, and in this department of knowledge he greatly excelled. All the powers of his mind were consecrated to this branch of learning, and in pursuing and teaching it he employed his utmost energy. His systematic Theology accords, mainly, with that of Jonathan Edwards, Dr. Williams, Andrew Fuller, Dr. Wardlaw, Dr. Dwight, and others of that school. But here, as in other things, he called no man "Master;" and therefore he examined and rejected whatever he found in these writers which he could not harmonize with the Scriptures. By this test he tries all that his favourite authors have written; and from this only legitimate storehouse he brings all that he propounds as doctrine to be believed, or practice to be observed. In his theological works, his acuteness, nice discrimination, clearness of thought, patient investigation, logical accuracy, precision of language, love of truth, and deference to the supreme authority of Divine revelation, are all pre-eminently displayed.

Moreover, it is here, more than in any other matter of studious examination, that he seems to have made everything his own, so as to have cast around his disquisitions a greater amount of originality than appears in any other portion of his writings. And yet there is no attempt to startle you with fresh and unheard-of discoveries, or to present anything new for the sake of novelty. He carries you to regions already visited, and traverses ground already trod; but then the survey and the mapping are all his own. Nor does he suffer you, for lack of description, to mistake any feature of the country, or to miss any landmark necessary for a right direction in the way you have to go. Mountain and valley, hill and dale, lake and river, all stand out with their exact dimensions, in bold and severe outline;—each road is thrown open, every track is traced, and depicted with minutest accuracy;—the smallest object in the landscape is marked with great care and consummate skill, and is made, by its very distinctiveness, to strike upon your vision; while the whole is illumed by the clearness of a pure atmosphere, and the brightness of a mid-day sun. You cannot mistake the character of the country he is in, nor what he is doing there, nor to what part of it he is conducting you. There is no mist to obscure your view, no labyrinth through which you are to grope without light, no tangled path for which he does not

furnish a clue. You may be sometimes ready to complain that the air of the region is cold, and you may long for the glow and startling noise of a blazing, crackling fire; still you cannot help feeling that the clearness of the surrounding sky is full of elasticity, which helps you to bound along with freshness and vigour. Or, to speak without a figure, in reading his theological treatises, you are never left to guess out his meaning,—the whole is palpably before you. He conjures up no mystery, leaving you to solve it,—all is natural, simple, obvious. You may not assent to everything he says, but you can be at no loss to apprehend *what* it is that he says. He tells you what he thinks; and he tells you in terms direct, well chosen, familiar, and easily understood.

The same severe accuracy and precision are manifest in all his polemical writings. He mystifies nothing, throws nothing into obscurity, nor makes any attempt at concealment. He tells you, without disguise or reserve, what he intends to do. And, what is not always done in controversy, he uniformly deals with an opponent with the utmost fairness and candour, and the manifestation of great benevolence of disposition. No one can complain of his temper, however keenly they may feel the force of his reasonings; and the power of these is so put forth as always to make them tell. A mere blunder he passes by with a slight exposure, and a gentle rebuke; but a flaw in argument he pursues with a keenness of scent which shows that he relishes the game; and a sophistical statement he holds up and gibbets without any sign of mercy. All his controversial works discover, also, his great and constant concern for the interests of truth and liberty. It was not on light matters or trivial occasions that he employed his pen. Some cardinal doctrine of holy writ, some religious principle, or some political question affecting the spirituality of Christ's kingdom, or the happiness of mankind,—these were the topics which called forth his activities, and engaged his firm, unflinching advocacy. And in treating these he never shrunk from the full avowal of his convictions. It never occurred to him to ask what would his friends or brethren think of his interference, or whether it might not conduce to his ease and comfort to avoid handling topics which would be to some persons unpleasant. His only question was, what is right?—what does truth, and the Lord of truth, demand?—and

having settled this point, he addressed himself to his duty, and said, "I also will show my opinion." He was no sycophant, no trimmer, no man of convenient expediency. He was too honest, too simple-minded, too manly, to ~~shirk~~ any question, or to skulk from any encounter from the fear of giving offence, when the cause of God or the well-being of man were jeopardized or assailed, and so required assistance.

Of his learning I will not presume to speak positively, not having the requisite ability. I am told, however, by those competent to form an opinion, and who knew him personally, as well as I did, that it was varied and respectable, though not what scholars would call extensive and profound. Classic lore, I believe, after he entered the ministry, he did not cultivate with any great avidity; nor did it belong to his department in the College. The truth is, his tastes and predilections led him in another direction; and hence Metaphysics, Moral Philosophy, and Theology, with their auxiliaries, became his favourite pursuits. Neither did he study to any great extent what is denominated Patristic Theology. He had considerable acquaintance with some of the best of the "Fathers;" but the necessity which has arisen of late years for studying the whole of these, in order to meet men of the Oxford school, did not exist until he had passed the meridian of his days. Pretty much the same may be said of him in relation to the writings of German neologists. He was unacquainted with their language, and consequently could only read their mystifications and myths in translations. Of these he knew enough to awaken his concern; and I remember a conversation with him which left on my mind the impression, that had he been a younger man he would have learned the language, for the purpose of entering the lists with those who were, as he thought, "darkening counsel by words without knowledge." Truly, this would have been, by one so versed as he was in dialectical skill, a matter of great importance for the interests of truth.

With the theological authors of our own country, both of past and present times, and with writers on Mental and Ethical Science, his acquaintance was large and various. Most of their works he had more than merely read,—he had diligently examined and deeply studied them; and so had mastered not only their leading

features, and more obvious principles, but had uncovered their very foundations, understood their methods, and detected their minutest defects and blemishes. This is manifest in the treatises he has published, and is well known to the several students trained by him for the Christian ministry.

In the Professor's chair, Dr. Payne always felt himself to be at home. Here he spent the greatest portion of each day, usually devoted to secular concerns, for six and twenty of the best years of his life; and here he put forth his skill and energy with marked fidelity and conscious power. All the resources of his knowledge were laid upon this altar, and all the capabilities of his intellect were concentrated in this arena. Here he wrought diligently—carefully—laboriously. This was his “occupation,” his “craft;” and in it he proved himself to be “a workman needing not to be ashamed.” Here knowledge was not *told out*,—it was *taught*. Nothing was done, in this position, superficially, but thoroughly. He sought not so much to place truth *before* the mind, as to implant it *in* the mind; and to do this he spared no pains. In thus teaching, the progress was necessarily more slow and measured; but it was also more sure. In a letter to myself, written about three years before his death, and forming part of a correspondence I was directed to hold with him previous to the removal of the College to Plymouth, he lays out his whole plan and method of tuition, and then adds,—“My great objects have been to communicate as large an amount of general information as possible,—to store the mind with truth on all subjects,—and pre-eminently to discipline and strengthen its powers. I have, occasionally, varied my plans and course; for as I have not spared labour, I have sought to adjust my proceedings to the cases of the students individually; and I am persuaded every Tutor must do this. No invariable plan of study will fit all minds. I may add, that all my courses are carried on by a system of daily and strict examination, so that I make myself certain that the young men understand what they are about.”

One of his former students, who for many years has occupied a respectable position in the Christian ministry, writes to me as follows:—“In the lecture-room our late Tutor excelled in the *con amore* manner in which he expatiated on Mental Science and Polemical Theology; and in the ease and fidelity with which he

would dissect the writings of Jonathan Edwards, Dwight, Fuller, Sandeman, Wardlaw, Belsham, Priestley, and others in the Divinity Class; and those of Stewart, Reid, Brown, and Mills in that of Mental and Moral Philosophy. A flaw in argument,—a *lapsus lingue* in style,—anything illogical in reasoning, he would be sure to detect and expose. Still, it was evident that whatever he objected to in the works of either his predecessors, or contemporaries, was from a desire to *know* and *teach* what, in conscience, he believed to be truth—the truth.”

“In all his prelections, and the exercises and examinations which attended them, no one could be more instructive to young men. He did not so much give you information already prepared, as put your mind in a train for self-acquisition. He taught you to have opinions of your own, and always to have a reason for your opinion, and to lay deep and carefully the foundation for correct and severe thought. He was ever ready to elicit questions, and never was he unable or unwilling to answer suitable ones. His mind was formed for the detection of any weak point in an argument, and for the nicest analysis, bringing out ideas and principles into full view from an exuberance or labyrinth of words in which they were sometimes involved. As he thought clearly, his style was always lucid, but not ornate; always nicely correct, but never fastidiously rounded in its periods. It was *thought* in few words—wisely selected—easily understood. On the whole, I may say that he was more discriminating than original—more philosophical than poetical—more analytical than profound. Still, he was neither insensible to the beauties of poetry, nor opposed to the sober soarings of imagination.”

His patience and forbearance in the lecture-room were conspicuous traits in his character, and his kindness and sympathy can never be forgotten by any who were placed under his charge. He entered into all their feelings, and views, and circumstances, and showed himself to have not only the wisdom and authority of a Tutor, but the heart of a father, and a friend. I am supplied with an instance illustrative of this:—“One of his students was observed by him to be somewhat depressed in mind,—the inquiry was put to him, more than once, whether he was in good health?—he replied that he was. The cause of depression was not ascer-



tained. In the course of a few weeks, previous to the vacation, the young man was called into the Doctor's study; when he told him that he had noticed how very unwell he appeared to be, that he feared there was something unpleasant on his mind, and had thought that possibly it might be pecuniary difficulties. He then placed a five-pound note in the student's hand, stating that he had mentioned his fears to a gentleman, who had handed him that amount for his assistance and necessary comfort. The young man was not actually in want, but was suffering from mental depression; however, the Doctor pressed the money upon his acceptance,—he took it, and shared it with a fellow-student that *was* in need. Here was a simple but not forgotten instance of the thoughtful kindness of the man." The person to whom the deed was done furnishes the tale, and adds,—“It is not every Tutor who would have had a sufficient feeling of interest to have acted thus.”

Dr. Payne's capabilities as a preacher have, as I think, been underrated, and in some instances, which I have seen, erroneously described. It has been said that he was not popular, nor fitted to become so, from natural disqualifications. To both branches of this statement I demur. Popularity, as conventionally understood, is a very ill-defined and unaccountable sort of thing, and often arises neither from extraordinary wisdom, or grace, or majesty, or any very remarkable fitness to secure it, but from something or other quite the opposite of all these. Some adventitious circumstances gather around a man,—they may be, in themselves, truly worthless, or indicative of a certain weakness, or simply ludicrous;—and yet they serve, in the estimation of the crowd, to clothe him with attributes which he does not really possess, who thenceforth proclaim him an extraordinary being; and while the unreasoning portion of the community are running after him, all judicious, thoughtful persons are wondering what it is the many can perceive to excite their preference, and to draw forth such manifestations of spell-bound attraction. On the other hand, the mere assertion that a given individual is not a popular preacher is quite enough to deter some persons from attending his ministrations; or if they should go to hear him, their minds are filled beforehand with little prejudices sufficient to draw away their attention from his excellences,

and prevent their perception of his capability to afford them instruction.

\* But, apart from all such obvious remarks, that Dr. Paync was an able, acceptable, useful, and therefore, in the best and most legitimate sense, popular preacher, the success of his labours in Edinburgh amply testify. Here he raised a mere handful of people into a numerous and respectable congregation, sufficiently large to require a commodious chapel, capable of containing twelve hundred persons, which was built and occupied during the period of his ministrations; and among this people he laboured for thirteen years in succession, and down to the last retained their highest esteem and respect. I am aware it may be said, in reply, that the training and intelligence of the Scotch better fitted them to appreciate the character and profit by the exercise of his ministry; and that his preaching was more adapted to the meridian of Edinburgh than to the southern portion of the kingdom. I may concede this. But then, what follows? Why the lack of popularity elsewhere, if I must use that conventional term, was not owing to disqualifications on the part of the preacher, but to the defective perceptions of those who were not sufficiently thoughtful, or well informed, or wise, to understand and value his fitness as a public instructor. That there was anything actually repellent in his voice, or manner, or gestures, in the pulpit, I am not willing to admit. I have heard him preach many times, and never perceived it. His matter was always excellent,—his discourses well prepared, carefully arranged, and delivered with a propriety, an affection, an earnestness that could not be mistaken. No one could hear him attentively without feeling assured that he was listening to the productions of a mind of no common order,—to a man who stated truth in the most lucid and fitting language, who was largely endued with the spirit of his Divine Master, and intensely anxious to secure the best interests of his fellow-men. What if he had not the exuberant imagination of a Hamilton, nor the silvery tongue of a McAll, nor the flowing diction of a Parsons, nor the sonorous tones of a Raffles or a James, nor the sententious quaintness of a Jay, nor the striking and epigrammatic style of a Binney? Are there not many who lack all these, and yet are highly honoured, and extensively useful? And are there not some who, besides such destitution, are devoid also

of sound wisdom, strong sense, and good taste,—but possessing a tolerable share of eccentricity, or of low wit, or of bold assumption, are ridiculously popular? Now, Dr. Payne could never talk nonsense. But he always did present in the pulpit clear and dignified exhibitions of Divine truth, and in a manner serious, forcible, and convincing;—so that thinking and godly people, those who looked for sense rather than sound, for the judicious rather than the metaphorical, for the regular and the harmonious rather than the exaggerated and the grotesque, were never disappointed, but always delighted and edified.

One who knew him as intimately as I did, and who had more frequent opportunities of hearing him, both in the pulpit and from the platform, describes him as follows:—"His sermons, if not massive, were always substantial. The foundation was broadly and deeply laid, and the goodly stones of truth constituted the superstructure. The square, the compass, and the plummet were carefully employed, and the laws of proportion seldom if ever violated. Everything was accurate, and in good, but severe taste. The crowd, for the most part, had not the necessary discernment to perceive the perfection and beauty of his intellectual architecture, and therefore it was lost upon them; but the staid, the thoughtful, and the devout, could not fail of being pleased with his discourses, as well as profited."

"In regard to his style, it possessed all the higher qualities. It was clear as the sunbeam. There could be no mistake as to the thought he designed to convey; nor could its amount and magnitude fail to be perceived, for his *full* meaning was before you. The chief fault of his style was that, generally speaking, it was too tame. This applies to his published works, more or less, as well as to his sermons. Not that it was always destitute of figure and ornament,—but the figure had, for the most part, the appearance of having been *fetched*, and the ornament of having been *put on*."

"In estimating him as a public speaker, I cannot pass by his elocution. It had the supreme qualities of distinctness and intelligibility. His voice was sufficiently strong, and his articulation was open and correct. His manner was solemn, devout, and earnest. It was manifestly apparent that he was full of solicitude, that his message might reach and benefit the heart. Everything in gesture,

spirit, and matter was suitable and impressive. There was considerable variety too in his delivery. You had the rising and falling inflections, to use the technicalities of rhetoric; so that it was not a smooth flat surface you looked upon, or a dead calm you felt,—anything but that;—yet, on close observation, you found that these inflections succeeded each other with such regularity and continuousness that, if his theme and the excellent matter by which it was illustrated did not absorb your soul, you felt disposed to long for some sudden gust to break up these constant and ever-recurring undulations. The fact is, the irregularities, not to say pranks and freaks of nature, had no place or play in Dr. Payne's elocution. And yet there were instances in which the impulsive power came, and came with such force as to rouse the preacher into unwonted animation, and give to his audience intense, because unexpected, delight. But this seldom occurred in his sermons."

"I have known him at Anti-slavery, Bible, and Missionary meetings, when he had intimation given him in time to prepare a speech, outpeering an entire platform of powerful speakers, and filling the hearts of a thousand people with his own inspiration, which was manifested by their loud and reiterated applause. In these instances, his voice rose or fell, whispered or roared, broke up or continued its tones, as the nature of the subject required; while he wooed, or caressed, or threatened, till you felt thrilled, enchanted, or carried whithersoever he led by the power of his eloquence. On such happy occasions the pressure from without—from the subject, the assembly, or both, or some other combination of circumstances, was intense, and he surrendered himself to the influence it created till it filled his whole soul." \*

Dr. Payne, whether observed amidst his public engagements, in his private walk, or social conversation, ever appeared before you as a man of God. His religion was not only unquestionable, but it was of the highest order. From his early youth to his dying day, he was eminent in all the exhibitions of a "life according to godliness." No one could be in his company, even for a limited period, without perceiving in him the fruits of a living active piety; while his intimate associates and friends saw the power and grace of the gospel reigning supreme. His spirit was singularly tender and gentle, and he was one of the most humble-minded men I ever

knew. Like his Divine Master, he was "meek and lowly in heart," and yet without anything approaching to meanness or coward fear. His modesty, simplicity, and unobtrusiveness were conspicuous on all occasions. Never did he thrust himself forward, or discover impatience to occupy prominent positions in any company or in any affair. He was ready indeed for every good work; and to aid in a righteous or useful cause, he was willing to accept any position, even though it was the lowest. His concern was not to please himself, but to promote the Divine glory;—to this he directed all his aims, and consecrated all his powers, and that with a patience and unweariedness which filled those who knew him with admiration of his constancy, and reverence for his devotedness. "One feature in dear papa's character," says his eldest son, "struck me as very marked,—his great diligence and fidelity in the discharge of duty. No personal considerations could ever induce him to forego any public claims; and when, on certain occasions, members of the family entreated him to allow himself a little relaxation, he always instantly and decidedly checked them."

His sincerity, uprightness, and integrity were manifest in every thing,—they rendered his character transparent; it was impossible to suspect him of deception, or double dealing, or any concealment. You looked upon his disposition and doings, and felt yourself compelled to yield implicit trust and confidence;—you were sure he would never betray, never disappoint you.

Faith, devotion, purity of life, holiness of walk and conversation, I have known but few who could be compared with him. Communion with God was the habit of his soul. He "lived, moved, and had his being," in fellowship with heaven; all his dispositions were baptized in this element; all his engagements were "sanctified by the word of God and prayer;" while his speech and temper breathed the same spirit, and were regulated by the same influence. To go with him to the throne of grace was no common privilege. His humiliation in the presence of the Holy One, his self-abasement, his penitential confessions of sin, his faith in the great atonement, his reliance on God's boundless mercy through Christ Jesus,—the devout, earnest, tender pleadings of his lowly yet confiding spirit for the revelations of grace, and the consolations of the Divine Comforter, were, at all times, subduing and affecting, and

at some seasons overwhelming. You could not avoid the sympathetic feeling; and as you felt, you said, "This is prayer;" or, with the disciples, "Lord, teach us to pray!"—"to pray as thy servant now prayeth!" Such a man could not fail to let his "profiting appear to all;"—nor could men omit to "take knowledge of him that he had been with Jesus."

With all his humility and tenderness of spirit, there was united great conscientiousness, constant adherence to principle; and unblenching obedience to the dictates of inspired truth; and hence his consistency and firmness of character. To turn him aside from what he held to be right was as hopeless as to break a block of granite with a feather, unless you could convince him that he was mistaken, and therefore wrong in judgment. Do this, and he yielded with the ease and simplicity of a little child; otherwise, and he was as immovable as the everlasting hills. Of expediency, accommodation where principle was concerned, he knew nothing, would know nothing; and, therefore, he could never disguise his opinions, nor seem to be what he was not. Let him feel that he had truth on his side, and then he never swerved. Still, if you dissented from his views, or even opposed them, he pronounced no harsh judgment, he delivered no censorious condemnation: he would toil hard to convince you, and bring you to his opinion; and if he failed, he would lament his want of success, and still go on his way. At the same time, it must be observed that he was a man of a truly catholic spirit. He loved all who loved "our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," and was ready to co-operate with them in works of piety and benevolence, and to hold religious and social fellowship with them at all times. That he did not join the Evangelical Alliance was not from the lack of catholicity; but from its abundance, and from the *real* influence which it exercised over him. He thought that every one wishing to unite in such a confederation should be admissible, on producing satisfactory evidence that he was a Christian, though he might not be able to profess belief in all the dogmatical declarations of a given creed. Such a thing he could never do himself, and was unwilling to impose articles of faith upon others. He held, that if Christ has received a man to communion with himself, Christ's disciples have no right to withhold from him their fellowship.

This benignity of temper and disposition was carried into all the relations he sustained. In his family it was seen, and felt, and revered. His wife, and children, and servants, all witnessed its exhibition, yielded to its attraction, and allowed their mutual and daily intercourse to be moulded and fashioned by its plastic power. Hence the home of his family was an abode of love and delightful harmony. "He did not write to us frequently," says his son,— "he had so much other writing; but his letters were always kindly and affectionately regardful of our best interests, and are very precious to us now, on account of the fragrance of the spirit which pervades them." One of his daughters observes,— "My dear father was sometimes bowed down with many troubles and anxieties; he said but little, however, of his trials and sorrows even to his children, though those of us who were constantly with him knew well how much he felt. His love toward his family was strong, and his influence and example powerful with all of us. His home was his delight; yet few matters that occurred there would make much appearance in print; but there are many little incidents, words, and even looks, which are imprinted on our memories, and call forth our gratitude that he not only feared God himself, but also taught us his fear." In the college and the social circle, the same affectionate, holy temper and behaviour were displayed,— securing the love and esteem of the young men committed to his hands, and binding in fondly-remembered bonds the friends with whom he from time to time associated.

His seriousness of deportment in the house of God was very observable, and his candour as a hearer of the word could scarcely be surpassed. He could sit at the feet of the least of Christ's servants, and derive profit from the humblest preachers of the gospel, if he knew them to be pious sincere men, and saw that, to the best of their ability, they were aiming to do good. Though he could not fail to perceive blemishes or deficiencies, whenever they appeared, yet carping criticism and captious fault-finding had no place in him. Earnest himself in the pulpit, he delighted to behold earnestness in others; and whether he was listening to the occasional exercises of the students, or to the discourses of men constantly occupied in the work of the ministry, if he found them dealing faithfully with truth, and with the consciences and hearts of the people, he

was always refreshed and delighted, and took pleasure in expressing his approval. An instance illustrative of this has been handed to me by a brother minister of this neighbourhood. He says,—“The Doctor was very little satisfied with preaching of any kind, however intellectual and eloquent, unless it told upon people’s consciences. He would often insist on the great need, in these times especially, of ‘powerful preaching.’ I very well recollect his entering my vestry one Sabbath evening, after a discourse which had from circumstances obtained much less preparation than ordinary, but in which my heart had been drawn out in rather a fervent manner, pressing upon unbelievers their danger and duty; and the good Doctor, in a very emphatic and serious manner, and with great cordiality, thanked me for the sermon. There could be nothing in the discourse itself, I am sure, worthy of such notice on his part,—it was its fervour and appeals to conscience that engaged his kind approval.” A somewhat similar occurrence once took place in reference to myself. I had been called from home during the week. The following Sabbath morning, I took with me some brief notes of a sermon which I had prepared some time before. Just as the service was commencing, the Doctor and his daughter came into the chapel. At its close, he expressed his great delight and gratification. I explained how I had been engaged during the week, and regretted his having heard a discourse on which, of necessity, so little care had been bestowed; when he said, “Ah! my brother, it needs no apology; it was aimed at the hearts of the people, and I have greatly enjoyed it;—always so preach, and, with the Divine blessing, usefulness will follow.” •

In this brief summary I have hitherto endeavoured, for the most part, to exhibit the excellences of his character, and am not conscious of having penned one sentence inconsistent with truthfulness. But, it may be asked, had he no faults? Undoubtedly he had, or he would have been more than human; and yet I confess, and that with honesty, that I know of none,—that I never witnessed any exhibitions of temper or behaviour deserving the name. I have made inquiries too, on this head,—of ministers who were once in his hands as students,—of those who knew him as familiar friends,—and of several who dwelt with him in the same abode; and although all can tell me of much to his credit, none have men-



tioned anything to his disadvantage. I am therefore at a loss about his imperfections. And yet, on further consideration, I think I can recollect one,—an infirmity, a weakness, I suppose I must call it. Let me describe it.

His guileless simplicity rendered him unsuspecting; and hence he was too easily imposed upon by the designing and artful. His acute, discriminating mind could detect a flaw in an argument instantly; and he could say *no* to an error in a statement, or a doctrine, with a decision and a firmness which nothing could shake; but to say *no* to a tale of distress, or to an appeal to his benevolence—even when a little examination might have discovered that the case was unworthy—was impossible to his tender, generous spirit. On the same account, he was liable to imposition in worldly transactions, where he only had to consult his own interests. Of the sagacity necessary to deal with a literary question, or a speculation, he had a full share; but of shrewdness in business affairs he was deficient. He was not versed in its terminology; and thinking that those with whom he had to do were as honest as himself, he sometimes made mistakes, and, in consequence, his pocket suffered. But for this, his various publications might have yielded him a better remuneration.

This weakness of his was occasionally displayed in other ways. I recollect an instance. A lying report had been put into circulation concerning a highly-respectable man in public life. It came to the ears of a gentleman to whom the defamer and the defamed were known, and who resided in the immediate neighbourhood of both. Instead of seeing the parties himself, he wrote a detail of the affair to Dr. Payne, and implored him instantly to see the accused, and make him aware of his position. The worthy Doctor was thrown off his guard, and in a state of great agitation and alarm he hastened to me, and, finding another minister with me, he took us aside, read the letter, and inquired what should be done. I said—"Do you not see, Doctor, the aim of the writer? He is almost next door to the man he writes about, and is, as you know, on friendly terms with him; why does not he go and sift the affair? The business is unpleasant, and he seeks to avoid it, and to shift the responsibility to your shoulders. You had better write, and tell him it is his duty to interfere." The

generous temper of the good man could, at first, scarcely admit this; but cautiously musing on the matter, as was his wont when a subject was put before him, he presently replied—"You are right. I will take that course." I may add, the report was inquired into, and exploded, and the defamer drew up and signed an ample apology.

Beyond what I have now adverted to as an infirmity I cannot advance, for I have no materials. I suppose there was something of pride in his nature, in common with all men; but I never saw any manifestations of it, while his exceeding humility was always prominent. Selfishness, if he possessed any, was eclipsed by his great benevolence. An approach to sensual indulgence I never beheld; he was "temperate in all things." Peevishness, or murmuring, had no indications in his countenance, nor, that I am aware, came forth from his lips. The irascible passions were so under control, that I do not remember ever to have seen him angry, and only once did I witness anything like indignation; and then it was not on his own account, but in behalf of a brother minister, who was treated with overbearing rudeness, in a social assembly, by a person who knew better, and who ought to have behaved more in accordance with his position and professions.

Whatever were Dr. Payne's failings, they all "leaned to virtue's side;" while his numerous excellences shone out so consistently, that it was impossible to see him anywhere, or to know him in any department of human life, without admiring and loving him. Above and over all his manifestations of character, there was something giving you an impression, which I do not know how to convey better than by the single term—*goodness*. This was with him everywhere. In the family, the social company, the Professor's chair, the College Committee,—in all he said or did, there appeared this feature of *goodness*. In association with the church of the Redeemer; in the pulpit and on the platform; in assemblies for the discussion of ecclesiastical affairs; and in meetings for conference with his brethren, he was ever esteemed and spoken of as "a good minister of Jesus Christ." Students who sat at his feet; hearers who hung upon his lips; strangers who were occasionally in his presence; familiar friends who were admitted to his intimacy; and his beloved offspring who followed him to the grave,

all remember him as “a *good* man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith.” *Young men and maidens, aged sires and matrons, learned professors and little children, still speak of him as of one to be revered for his wisdom, and, above all, to be loved for his goodness.*

While engaged in writing this brief memoir, my own impressions of his holy benignity have been confirmed and deepened; and still, in every review I take of past intercourse with him, and in every contemplation I indulge of the several aspects of his character, one thought, beyond every other, rises in my heart, and one sentence springs to my lips,—THE GOOD DOCTOR PAYNE!

# ADDRESS

AT THE

INTERMENT OF THE REV. GEORGE PAYNE, LL.D.

BY THE REV. H. F. BURDER, D.D.

NEVER did I follow a friend to the grave with a deeper persuasion that his spirit was with Christ, than I feel at this solemn moment regarding my beloved and lamented brother ! Who will hesitate to say of him—" He was a good man ;" and not unlike that holy man of God, of whom it is recorded that " he was full of faith and of the Holy Ghost." For nearly half a century he was my endeared friend ; and during all that period, his Christian character never fell under suspicion or animadversion. Ever dear to my memory, and to my heart, must be the retrospect of the years of our early friendship. How often, how pleasurably, and how profitably we read together, studied together, prayed together, stimulated each other onwards in our course, congratulated each other in success, and condoled with each other under affliction !

Never did one single cloud arise to intercept the sunshine of Christian and confidential friendship. Our sympathies with each other were unusually perfect ; not only from the accordance of our views and sentiments on subjects of primary importance, but also from some similarity of mental tendencies and predilections. In pursuing our studies at college, we both found peculiar delight in the researches connected with intellectual and moral science ; and

to the habits of mind he thus acquired I can trace, without danger of mistake, much of that deserved eminence which my beloved friend subsequently attained, both as an author and a tutor. Endowed by the Father of spirits with great perspicacity of mind, he thus acquired habits of clearness of conception, acuteness of discrimination, power of reasoning, and precision of language. And the best of all is, that these talents and acquirements were consecrated, with devotedness of heart, to the cause of revealed truth, in the service of his God and Saviour. A warmer love of truth, and especially of the truth of the gospel, I never discovered in any servant of Christ. No man was more entitled to say, regarding the purpose of his heart, "We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." With what simplicity of aim, intensity of desire, and power of convincing argument, he was enabled to promote the cause of truth and holiness, his elaborate and valuable writings sufficiently evince!

And who that knew him intimately could remain ignorant of the influence and ascendancy of the truths of the gospel over his own mind and heart? *There* they were deeply seated, as vital and vivifying principles, pervading the inmost soul, and controlling the outward demeanour. It was thus that he manifestly became "an epistle of Christ, known and read of all men."

His spirit was deeply imbued with the humility, the meekness, the gentleness, the benignity, the simplicity, and the sincerity of an imitator of Jesus! You could not know him, especially when he felt himself at ease and at home, in the intercourse of Christian friendship, without loving him, and confiding in him; and never did he betray or abuse the confidence reposed! And when, either in the family or the sanctuary, you bent the knee before the throne of grace, and united in the supplications which he poured forth, you felt irresistibly the impression, that he was indeed a man of prayer—a man of God! What a spirit of devout adoration did he breathe in his approaches to his Father in heaven! What a depth of self-abasement there was in his confessions! What a steadfastness of believing confidence did he evince in the promises of Him who heareth prayer! With what peaceful repose did he rely on the finished work of that Redeemer who loved us, and gave himself for us! How earnest

and intense were his desires and aspirations after the indwelling and mighty working of the Sanctifier and the Comforter! With what filial submission did he bow to the will of the Father of mercies, who chastens his children because he loves them! •

That such a man was pre-eminently fitted for the work of guiding and training other minds, who can doubt? That he was richly endowed and furnished for the arduous duties of a Christian minister must be at once apparent. But it was not difficult to perceive, that the distinguishing peculiarities of his mind would find their most appropriate sphere in the range of thoughts and habits pertaining to the functions of a tutor in a theological college.

To that elevated and momentous department of service Dr. Payne was called, on the removal of *his* beloved friend and *mine*, Dr. Joseph Fletcher, from the presidency of the Lancashire College at Blackburn, to the pastoral charge at Stepney. During about six years Dr. Payne presided over that seminary, with great benefit to his pupils, and great honour to himself; and at the close of that period, with all the advantages of matured knowledge, and in the full vigour of his superior powers, he quitted the scene of his labours at Blackburn, to enter on a sphere of similar engagements in your Western College; to the interests of which, for nearly twenty years, he devoted all the energies of his mind and heart.

For a considerable time, I had not been without anxious apprehensions that his labours were becoming too onerous for his physical strength: nor was he himself exempt from the risings of such solicitude. In a long letter which I received from him, soon after his domestic bereavement, he expressed a doubt whether he should be able much longer to sustain the pressure of his arduous engagements; and he intimated a wish, that, should his life be spared, it might be possible for him to retire from his laborious duties, and to devote his remaining time and strength to the quiet efforts of the mind and the pen, in which he hoped that he might still be permitted to render some service to the cause of Christ. But from all these approaches to the apprehended infirmities of age, and from all the sufferings which might have been the result of protracted illness, our beloved friend was most merci-

fully exempted. He was taken at once, as if almost by a sudden and glorious translation, from his honourable and useful labours in the college and in the pulpit, to the rest and the recompence and the glory of heaven! He rests from his labours, and his works shall follow him! On the evening of the last Lord's day but one, he passed from the pulpit to his bed, and from his bed to his heavenly home, and the presence of his Lord and Saviour! Often had he meditated on those words of majesty and might which fell from the lips of Jesus, on his approach to the tomb of Lazarus:—"I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die." And what did my beloved brother see, or taste, or feel, or know of death? Perhaps only a passing struggle intervened between the slumber of the night, and the awakening and the kindling and the exulting emotions of the emancipated spirit; pausing, we may suppose, for a moment, to look on the frail and forsaken tenement, in which it had sojourned for threescore years and seven, and then bidding it a long farewell, to enter on the upward path of life and light, under the guidance of benignant angels, and to realize the full blessedness of knowing that "to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord!"

And now, with a hope full of immortality, we are looking for the second coming of our blessed Lord, who will "change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his own glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself."—"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!'"

How momentous, then, dear friends, is the inquiry, when approaching the grave of a saint of God, "Shall I die the death of the righteous?—shall I have a part in the resurrection of the just?"

Is it now my chief solicitude to know Christ, to love Christ, to serve Christ, and to be found in him on the day of his appearing? Am I looking, with intense desire, and in the humble confidence of faith, for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life?" The Lord grant that we all *may* find mercy of the Lord at that day!



# LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

BY THE

REV. GEORGE PAYNE, LL.D.

1. Youth admonished to submit to the Guidance of God. A Sermon preached at the Chapel in Fish Street, Kingston-upon-Hull, January 8th, 1809. 8vo., pp. 32.

2. Britain's Danger and Security; or, the Conduct of Jehoshaphat considered and recommended. A Sermon preached at the Chapel in Fish Street, Kingston-upon-Hull, February 5th, 1812.

3. An Exposition of Romans, chap. ix. 6-24, designed to illustrate the Doctrine of Divine Sovereignty. Edinburgh, 1816. 12mo., pp. 60.

4. Remarks on the Moral Influence of the Gospel upon Believers, and on the Scriptural Manner of ascertaining our State before God; to which are added Observations on the Radical Error of the Glassite or Sandemanian System, and on the Doctrine of Divine Influence. Edinburgh, 1820. 12mo., pp. 98.

5. Mistakes concerning the Way of Salvation unfolded. A Tract. Edinburgh, 1821.

6. The Instrumentality of Divine Truth in the Sanctification of the Souls of Men. A Discourse on John xvii. 17. 8vo., pp. 37. Edinburgh, 1823.

7. The Law of Christ in relation to Offences unfolded; in an Address to the Churches of the Congregational Order in the County of Lancaster. 12mo., pp. 34. Blackburn, 1827.

8. Elements of Mental and Moral Science. 8vo., pp. 529. Blackburn, 1828.

Ditto. Second Edition, 1842.

Ditto. Third Edition, 1845.

9. The Argument derived from Miracles, in Support of the Divine Origin of Christianity, illustrated. A Lecture. 12mo., pp. 60. Exeter, 1830.

10. The Separation of Church and State calmly considered, in reference to its probable Influence upon the Cause and Progress of Evangelical Truth in this Country. 8vo., pp. 47. Exeter, 1834.

11. Lectures on Divine Sovereignty, Election, the Atonement, Justification, and Regeneration. 8vo., pp. 454. Exeter, 1836.

Ditto. Second Edition, 1838.

Ditto. Third Edition, 1846.

12. The Operation of the Voluntary Principle in America; an Extract from the recent Work of Drs. Reed and Matheson. With a Preface and an Appendix. 12mo., pp. 42. Exeter, 1836.

13. The Response of the Church to the Promise of the Second Coming of our Lord. A Discourse on the Death of the late Mr. Heudebourek, of Taunton. 8vo., pp. 32. Exeter, 1837.

14. A Funeral Discourse occasioned by the Death of the late Rev. Joseph Buck, of Wiveliscombe. 12mo., pp. 26. Exeter, 1837.

15. The Church of Christ considered in reference to its Members, Objects, Duties, Officers, Government, and Discipline. 12mo., pp. 116. Exeter, 1837.

16. A Letter to the Editor of the American Biblical Repository; containing Remarks upon a Paper in that Work, by Professor Stuart, on Original Sin. 8vo., pp. 20. Exeter, 1839.

17. Facts and Statements in reference to the Bible-printing Monopoly. 8vo., pp. 16. Exeter, 1841.

18. A Manual explanatory of Congregational Principles. 24mo., pp. 36. Exeter, 1842.

19. Elements of Language and General Grammar. 12mo., pp. 236. Exeter, 1843.

College and School Edition. Foolscap 8vo.; 1845.

20. Strictures on certain Portions of Dr. Marshall's Work on the Atonement. 8vo., pp. 42. Exeter, 1843.

21. The Question: "Is it the Duty of the Government to provide the Means for the Education of the People?" examined. 12mo., pp. 32. Exeter, 1843.

22. Remarks upon a Pamphlet, entitled "The Doctrine of the Universal Atonement examined," ascribed to the Rev. David Thomas, of Mauchline. 8vo., pp. 32. Exeter, 1844.

23. The Doctrine of Original Sin; or, the Native State and Character of Man unfolded. 8vo., pp. 454. Exeter, 1845.

24. A Letter to Sir Culling Eardley Smith, on the Maynooth Endowment Bill. Exeter, 1845.

25. The Nature and Means of Religious Revivals, exhibited in a Discourse, delivered before the Members of the South Devon Congregational Union; and published at their request. 8vo., pp. 24. Plymouth, 1846.

26. Introductory Discourse at the Ordination of the Rev. Hugh McKay, at Liskeard, Cornwall. 8vo., pp. 15. Plymouth, 1846.

#### POSTHUMOUS.

27. Lectures on Christian Theology. In two volumes 8vo., pp. clii., 431, and pp. 512.

# REMINISCENCES

OF THE LATE

REV. GEORGE PAYNE, LL.D.

BY THE REV. RALPH WARDLAW, D.D.

IT has occasioned me some degree of regret that, in the advertisements of the forthcoming *Life and Writings* of my excellent and lamented friend, so much prominence should have been given to these reminiscences:—because, how cheerfully soever furnished, and how pleasantly soever to myself, they must of necessity be so scanty as almost certainly to disappoint the expectations which may thus have been raised. It is, however, at the same time, no slight gratification to me to have my name, by this means, associated with the memory of one whose friendship I valued, whose character I esteemed and loved, whose mental powers, with their able and useful exercise, I appreciated and admired, and who, in his departure from earth, has left behind him so sweet a savour of Christ.

It was at the opening of the Session of 1804-5, in the University of Glasgow, that Joseph Fletcher, George Payne, and Henry Forster Burder (to place the now exalted dead reverentially first) were introduced to my acquaintance. I had not then been two years in the ministry, and not much more than one under my own connubial roof. Under that roof, all the three were very soon as familiarly intimate as if they had been brothers to each other, and

brothers to myself and "the wife of my youth." We somehow took mightily to each other. I look back with a pensive delight on those bygone days. They were days of real pleasure. We enjoyed their society, and they ours. They knew and felt that they were always welcome; the door at all seasons open to them. And many were the happy evenings, when the business of their classes (to which they all applied themselves with such exemplary and successful assiduity) permitted, which we spent together, in easy, friendly, lively intercourse,—conversing on every variety of topic, lighter or more serious; and blending and relieving conversation with interludes of music, in which they were all adepts in their respective parts, and formed a first-rate trio in singing "the songs of Zion." The harmony of the concert was equalled by that of the social companionship. Both were perfect. On Lord's-day evenings, when the public services were over, frequently would they come and take part in our domestic devotions and our closing meal, and talk over the texts and sermons of the day, or subjects of a kindred character, with a buoyant yet hallowed cheerfulness.

All these three loved and honoured friends attended for three successive Winter and Spring Sessions at the University; during the whole of which time the same friendly intimacy was maintained. In our subsequent family communings, they were distinguished by the *soubriquet* of "*the first three*." The attendance of evangelical students from any of the dissenting theological colleges in the South was a new thing; so that to other and worthier bonds of union and springs of enjoyment there was superadded the charm of novelty and rarity. And although there were among their subsequent associates and successors some, both now dead and still living, who were neither less eminent, less intimate, nor less loved; yet, the number increasing, and the attachment necessarily becoming, to a certain degree, diluted by diffusion, it was wont to be a common saying with us as to some—"they were honourable among the thirty, but they did not attain to the first three."

And these "first three" all gave ample proof of the ability, the diligence, and the success, with which they availed themselves both of their previous classical and theological studies, and of their *curriculum* at the University:—all of them having not only fulfilled with acceptance and usefulness the ordinary functions of the

pastoral charge, and the more general Christian ministry; but having also occupied posts of honour, as professors in three different theological colleges in England, for the education of the rising ministry. Two of them have now been called away from their labours here to their reward above. The third survives, loved and honoured as ever. For the first of the two lamented dead I preached, by invitation, the funeral sermon, and supplied some few materials, chiefly from his private correspondence, for the memoir of his life and writings; a memoir so creditable to both the head and heart of his son, the worthy inheritor of the paternal name. And now I am called to supply materials of a similar kind for the memoir of the second. The letters of Dr. Payne, however, having been much greater rarities than those of Dr. Fletcher, what I have in my power to furnish is proportionally less in amount.

Dr. Payne's idiosyncrasy was early marked by that metaphysical acuteness of discrimination which so eminently distinguishes all his writings. And like most, if not all, of the possessors of this mental peculiarity, he delighted in its exercise. He was fond of a little bit of an argument. He could dissect an atom, and split a hair, and subdivide the splits, with admirable nicety. Few could surpass him. And in such evenings as those referred to, many a good-humoured discussion, sometimes in earnest and sometimes in play,—sometimes for truth and sometimes as a mere trial of skill,—we used to have; all taking our part;—but when the point happened to be one of metaphysical puzzle or dubious moral casuistry, he the foremost. I have no recollection of any of us ever getting cross. Our debates were characterized by the *seria mixta joci*; and they generally ended in some one's suddenly discovering how very fast the time had flown, and starting to his feet to bid a reluctant but cheerful good-night.

I well remember a discussion arising, one Sabbath night,—in what way I do not recollect,—on the question whether, in any case, it was justifiable to *tell a lie*. Our excellent friend took up the affirmative; arguing that there were cases in which it might not be justifiable merely, but a duty. He supposed one. You happen to be at a place where two or three roads meet. A man passes you at full speed, and tells you that his enemy is in pursuit of him, to take his life. He takes the road *to the left*. The intending mur-

derer comes up. He inquires whether you have seen the man, and which way he has gone. You reply, without hesitation, *to the right*. He insisted that, in thus deceiving him, you were not only justifiable, but doing what the law of God required. The ground taken by him was not exactly that of Paley,—namely, that madmen and assassins had no right to know the truth. It was somewhat different. Here, he contended, are two commandments. “Thou shalt not *lie*” is one. “Thou shalt not *kill*” is another. It is a duty to adhere to truth. It is a duty to preserve human life. In the supposed case, which of the two is the more important and obligatory? About the answer to such a question who can hesitate? In the one case, you become accessory to murder:—in the other, you at once preserve life—a valuable life it may be,—and you save the intending murderer from actual blood-guiltiness. The case was a strong one. I took the position, that while there was no obligation to tell the truth, neither would it be right to tell the lie; that the duty would be to refuse to tell at all, and yourself risk the consequence.

*P*——. Ah! but suppose the murderer were turning to the *left*—the way taken by the pursued, and your lie would arrest him, and turn him to the *right*, and so save his victim! I still insist that, in such an exigency, *life* is more valuable than *truth*, and demands the lie to preserve it.

*W*——. Well, then, since telling a lie is itself an evil ——

*P*——. Aye—but stop a bit. I deny that in these circumstances it is an evil: I affirm it a duty.

*W*——. Well, well:—you affirm it a duty *in these circumstances*. It is by the circumstances that it is converted into a duty. It would not be a duty, but a sin, in other—in ordinary circumstances. It ranks, then, clearly among the cases of “doing evil that good may come.” It is the good that comes of the lie—the preservation, namely, of life and of innocence, and the actual prevention of a fearful crime—that makes it a duty. We must take it up, then, upon the great general principle which, in the Bible, is laid down for such cases. That principle we have on the authority of Paul. My argument is this; and if it can be fairly set aside, I give in. It so happens, that the hypothetical case put by the Apostle is one in which the end supposed to be gained is

incomparably higher than the preservation of human life, of any created existence,—than anything, in short, that pertains to creatures:—it is the highest conceivable, the highest possible:—it is “*the glory of God.*” What says he? “If the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory, why yet am I judged as a sinner? and not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose condemnation is just.” If, then, even on the supposition of my lie *promoting God’s glory*, the telling of it would be wrong,—it cannot be right to tell it for any inferior consideration; and inferior every other must be.

P——. “Plato, thou reason’st well.” But the cases do not seem to be parallel. We are not at all competent judges of what may be, or may not be, for the glory of God. So that we may tell a lie for the sake of something which we fancy will be for God’s glory, when, in fact, we are mistaken, and it may prove dishonouring to him. But we are quite competent to know when the life of a fellow-creature is in jeopardy, and by what means it may be preserved.

W——. Very true:—but mark—the Apostle is settling *a principle*. The case supposed by him is not one in which we only imagine that the Divine glory will be promoted. It is no such problematical case. It is a case in which it is assumed that the glory of God *actually* is promoted. And yet, even on this assumption, the act is condemned.

P——. But may it not be questioned, whether the case supposed by the Apostle is that of a man telling the lie *with a view to* the glory of God,—that being the man’s *motive*? May it not be simply the case of a man’s telling a lie, from whatever motive, and God’s turning the lie to account for effecting that end?—the sinner being represented as thinking it hard that in such a case he should be punished, when that which he has done has actually been the occasion of bringing glory to Him by whom he is judged?

W——. That won’t do. The answer is clear. It is only the act being done *with that view* that makes it in point to the general subject. That subject is—the doing of evil “*that good may come;*” an expression which evidently assumes the good to be *in the intention of the agent*.



Whether the debate went any farther,—and if any farther, how far ;—whether he had the last word or I ;—memory cannot record. Some watch, I think, happened to be looked at ; and—“ Dear me, how late it is ! ” was its sudden close. Such little skirmishings were all in the most perfect good humour. They were a kind of pastime of young divines, as we all then were,—practising with the foils, to fit us for more serious warfare, not with one another, but with the enemies of Divine truth.

Our departed friend had then,—and from his recent visit to Scotland—to Glasgow—to my own dwelling—I could perceive, amidst all his felt infirmities and pains, and all his manifestly growing spirituality of mind, pensiveness of feeling, and heavenliness of aspiration,—it was there still, inwrought in his mental constitution, and continuing one of its characteristics to the last,—a lively sense of the *humorous*. No man could enjoy a racy anecdote, a clever repartee, a well-got-up piece of burlesque,—or a pun, a bull, or a conundrum, with any point or wit in it,—more heartily than he. I see his face before me, in those days of yore, at my own table,—where it was invariably in excellent glee,—looking down towards me from my wife’s right or left hand, with that peculiar expression, which told as plainly as face could that something droll was forthcoming ;—and then, when it did come, the hearty though half-suppressed laugh,—the eyes running over,—and the spectacles raised with the one hand, for the application of the handkerchief with the other.

But those eyes had tears too for other occasions than those of innocent mirth. He was a “ man of feeling,”—not in the sickly sentimental sense of the designation,—but of feeling unaffected, deep, and tender. His benevolent and friendly sympathies were strong. They lay, not on the surface, but in the depths of his heart. I can fancy the instant change on the same countenance, on the mention and rehearsal of any touching incident, or scene of sorrow,—especially if it at all affected those whom he knew and loved. His sympathies then mounted at once from the bottom to the surface, filled the eyes, and found grave and affectionate utterance from the lips. He was a warm-hearted, unselfish, consistent, and steady friend.

After he left the University, my correspondence with him, as

already hinted, was not frequent. He was, I presume, like many others, and myself among the rest, not over fond of letter-writing. From the few epistles of his in my possession, I may present two or three extracts, such as may bring before the reader some of his characteristic peculiarities.

The first of these is under date, Edinburgh, November 12th, 1812. I had sent him a copy of a sermon on Providence, preached by me on occasion of the intelligence of the death of my brother, who fell in the battle of Salamanca.

My dear Brother,

\* \* \* \* \*

Accept my best thanks for your excellent sermon, and your last truly affectionate letter. I trust, my dear brother, that you and yours have felt, and will continue to feel, the supporting and consoling influence of those blessed truths which you have so admirably stated. Oh what a mercy to be enabled to say, under every dispensation, "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good!" \* \* \* \* \* At the chapel, I hope we have as much encouragement as we could expect for the time. The church has received an accession of nearly *twenty* since I came, and we hope for others soon. Our congregations also are evidently better. In the afternoon the place is generally full, and in the evenings crowded. May the Lord send prosperity! I never expected, and never desired, a rapid increase, either in the church or congregation. I recollect how you have gone on gradually, and that your additions have generally been permanent ones. I trust ours will be the same.

The second is from a letter, dated February 22nd, 1813, written just after the death of one of his children; though by far the larger portion of it, necessarily omitted, relates to quite a different subject. It shows, though in few words, how he felt the consolations under affliction which he addressed to others.

My dear Friend,

For some days past I have felt a strong desire to write to you; but have been prevented by family distress. Before this reaches you, you will have heard, perhaps, that we have lost our dear little boy. He was a promising plant; and we had allowed ourselves probably to indulge too eager and confident anticipations of what he would be when his powers began to expand. So prone are we to undue security in the enjoyment of our present comforts. God has given us a severe check, however. He has touched us in a very tender part. He was *our first and only boy*. But let us not repine; since we have

every reason to believe that he is removed from the storms of this wilderness, to bloom for ever in the paradise above. My dear wife has had much fatigue; but, through mercy, her strength has been equal to her day. I trust we are enabled mutually to say—"The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; and blessed be the name of the Lord." \* \* \* \* \*

The third extract bears date in June of the same year. The letter was written for a comparatively unimportant purpose,—to obtain my consent to be his pulpit supply for two out of four Lord's days, when he was to be absent on a visit to England. I give it simply as a specimen of his propensity to the *facetious*; trusting to the reader's good nature, that he will not impute it to a less creditable motive. It will show, moreover, the habits of familiar intimacy and freedom subsisting between him and his correspondent. He had already, it would appear, written once, and I had assigned five reasons for declining.

My very dear Friend,

You might indeed well say you were "going to surprise and disappoint." From your former letter, I had calculated upon it as certain that you would so far take compassion upon us as to give us a Sabbath or two. Yet I am obliged to admit that *some* of the reasons with which your prolific genius has supplied you are not destitute of weight. Especially the first. Our good wives demand, if it were possible to pay it, double attention and tenderness *in a certain state*; and from what I know of *both*, I am ready to attest that they *both* deserve it. I am not so sure of the validity of the other reasons,—especially Nos. 2, 3, and 5. With respect to the *fourth*, I have to say, that perhaps it may be as difficult for you to obtain an *acceptable* supply as for me to obtain one; but that an *acceptable* supply is of far less importance to you than to me. You must not suppose I am considering our church and congregation as upon an equality with yours. No, my dear friend. When I first asked you to help us, I was sensible it was something like the Curate of Brentford soliciting the Bishop of London to step into his pulpit, and give him a sermon. [Those who knew the writer will fancy the quizzical look with which he penned this bit of cajolery.] Our claims to your assistance are derived, not from our strength and importance, but from our weakness and insignificance. And surely it is the natural order of things, for the weak to look up to the strong for help. We should still, therefore, be much obliged to the Bishop of London to take the Curate of Brentford by the hand, and to give him a little assistance. In plain English, and joking aside, if you could, without running much risk on account of Mrs. W., still spend only one Sabbath—say the second of July—with our people, it would be conferring both on them and on me a very great obligation. I would not press it so much but for the following reason. Through the goodness of God to us, our congregation has very considerably increased. In the afternoon and evening we are

full. Last Lord's day there were more, I think, than ever I saw in the winter. Several were in the — what shall I call it?—*pigeon-hole* gallery. Still I am sensible that they are not to be depended upon. They are brought, many of them, perhaps, by curiosity, rather than by regard to the doctrine, the preacher, or the place. And a very little thing might prevent their ever making their appearance among us again. It is therefore of great importance to me to obtain supplies that will be undoubtedly acceptable, as I am likely to be absent for four Sabbaths. Especially to *begin* with one. \* \* \* \*

My dear wife and child arrived safely in London, after a passage of seven days; [how times and distances are changed!—I had once a passage of the same length;] during the whole of which time Mrs. P. was violently sick. In her letters, however, she says she is better. With kindest regards to Mrs. W. and all friends,

I remain,

Your Lordship's most obedient humble Servant,

*The Curate of Brentford,*  
*alias G. PAYNE.*

The following was written just after the death of a very lovely and beloved child in my own family, about two years old. The extract is very brief; because he had the prospect, as the letter shows, of being soon with us in person as our guest.

EDINBURGH, *March 28th*, 1814.

My dear Brother,

If nothing occur to prevent it, I intend to be in Glasgow at the end of this week. We have only lately heard of your loss; or I should have written to you sooner, to express my sympathy with you and Mrs. W. under the affecting dispensation. I need not remind you, my dear brother, of the hope which the gospel exhibits to Christian parents in your circumstances, concerning their children,—the hope of going to them, though they shall not return to us. I trust you and Mrs. W. have derived so much consolation from it, as to render it impossible for you ever to forget it. May the merciful hand of our heavenly Father bind up the wound under which you are now suffering! I believe I promised, when you were in Edinburgh, to take up my abode with you when I came West. My wife suggests, that in the late and present state of your family, it may not be exactly convenient. If that be the case, I beg, my dear brother, you will say so without any hesitation, and I will find another lodging. Messrs. E. and H. have asked me to stay with them; but till I hear from you, I shall hold myself bound by my promise to you.

My object in coming West at this time is the Hymn-book, about which, you will see, Messrs. Ewing and myself are engaged. I have promised to preach for him in the evening. If you think proper, you may command me for either morning or afternoon. I am not very able to preach more than twice.

\* \* \* \*

We next get into the depths of theological metaphysics, on two subjects; one of which at least has baffled the wit of man from the beginning hitherto, and bids fair to baffle it to the end. The first was the question—*whether regeneration precedes the spiritual discernment of Divine truth*;—and the second, *the late Dr. Edward Williams's theory of the origin of evil*. On the former topic, a query had appeared in the *Scottish Christian Herald* for April 1814, to which he refers in the cited paragraph of his letter.

EDINBURGH, May 10th, 1814.

My dear Brother,

\* \* \* \* \*

You will see a reply to the query on knowledge in this month's *Herald*, of which I should be glad to hear your opinion. I am not sure if you will go with me as far as I have gone; but I seem to fancy that I feel my ground pretty firmly. I suspect I am on the road to *Fullerism*, if not a stage beyond. I do not tread it very cordially somehow or another; yet at present I see no way of escape. If our views of objects are according to the moral state of our hearts; if no object spiritually good *can appear* excellent to a heart morally depraved (which I can neither deny nor doubt); it seems necessarily to follow, that some change must be effected in the *moral state* of the heart, by the direct agency of the Spirit of God, before spiritual objects *can appear* excellent. What is the nature of this change, however, I know not. It would seem that nothing short of an actual removal of dislike to spiritual objects would render it possible for them to *appear* excellent. Yet the removal of dislike or hatred differs so little from the implantation of love,—and it is so difficult to conceive of our loving any object, not only without a perception of its excellence, but even before it *appears* excellent,—that I know not what to think. If we believe, however, in the salvation of any infant's dying in infancy, we must believe that a moral change passes on their minds; and that change can hardly be a change in their actual views and affections, but in their moral capacity, so to speak,—in their ability to see and to feel towards Divine things aright. Is it not possible to conceive of some change of this kind effected by the immediate agency of the Spirit of God? Here I am perplexed. I wish you would write me on the subject. I know no one so able to throw light upon it as yourself.

You told me you thought Dr. Williams's sentiments concerning the origin of evil destroy human accountability. What is necessary to accountability? That the command be *reasonable and just*; that it be not beyond the physical power of the individual to whom it is addressed; that those external motives and inducements which are the instruments of God's moral government be exhibited to him, to lead him in the path of duty; and that he be free from all external restraint. If you make anything *more* necessary to accountability, I am afraid you will destroy accountability altogether. Adam came out of the hands of his Maker with *more* than this, viz. with *moral power*; as an infinitely

holy being could not give existence to a creature in a state of moral pravity. But, supposing he lost that, did he lose his accountability? Surely not, if it be not *necessary* to accountability. Supposing this moral power was what he could not preserve without constant Divine support, and that the loss of it was as necessary and certain (provided Divine support were withdrawn) as the continued sin of transgressors is necessary and certain, unless moral power be restored,—how does that affect the question of culpability and accountability? I confess that to me it appears to leave it untouched. You must, I think, maintain that moral power is necessary to accountability; (and if so, you will find that all the Calvinistic host is marshalled against you;) and if you maintain this, it deserves to be remembered that no unregenerate man can be either accountable or culpable.

I hope Mrs. W. and family are all well. Through mercy, we are all in health. Pray excuse this metaphysico-theological, comical letter, and write soon to

Your attached Friend,

GEORGE PAYNE.

Controversy on such points here is, of course, out of the question. A few sentences of explanation must be all. Whether I wrote in reply, soon or late, or at all, is more than I now recollect. I well remember, however, a conversation on the former of these abstruse subjects between my friend and myself, when enjoying a solitary walk together at Inveresk, near Musselburgh, during the interval between certain public services at the latter place, of which the particular occasion has escaped me. All that I wanted of him, to bring our sentiments into harmony, was the admission,—and he did not then object to it, and afterwards more distinctly conceded it,—that the operation of the Holy Spirit, mutually admitted to be necessary to the spiritual discernment of Divine truth—that is, to the discernment of its really Divine excellence and glory—is imparted when that truth either *is* or *has been presented to the mind*; that it is not in such a sense *preparatory* as to have effected the change signified by regeneration *antecedently even to such presentation*:—in other words, that, when “the truth” is presented to the mind of the sinner, the Holy Spirit, by his secret and mysterious influence—an influence the mode of which we are admonished by the Great Teacher himself not to expect or attempt to comprehend (John iii. 8)—imparts such a perception of its Divine excellence and glory—its suitableness at once to the claims of God’s character and the felt exigences of man’s condition—as ensures its

being cordially embraced, and thus contributing to effect the blessed change—the turning of the heart to God. It was when Lydia heard Paul (Acts xvi.) that “the Lord opened her heart to attend to the things spoken by him.” And the affirmations of the instrumentality of “the word” in regeneration are so explicit and pointed, that it is not easy to imagine how they can be set aside. “Of his own will begat he us *by the word of truth*, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.”—“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, *by the word of God*, which liveth and abideth for ever; and this is the word which *by the gospel* is preached unto you.” (James i. 18; 1 Peter i. 23, 25.) And so Paul, when he speaks of himself as a spiritual father to those who were regenerated by the spirit under his ministry,—“In Christ Jesus I have begotten you, *through the gospel*.” (1 Cor. iv. 15.) Such declarations as these seem to me to be set aside as meaningless, if we conceive regeneration effected previously to, and independently of, the presentation of the truth to the mind. And if, in any correct sense of the term—any sense that really includes its just amount of meaning—it is effected *without* the word, of what use does the word become? If the chief part of the work of sanctification—the *actual change* from enmity to love—has been effected without it, why may not *progress* be effected without it too?—if the introduction of the principle, why not its growth? The case, I should presume, is much as if a person, previously destitute of all taste for the picturesque and beautiful in natural scenery, were looking on an exquisitely lovely landscape, and by some secret influence, such as he cannot explain, he feels his coldness and aversion give way;—sees, as he never saw before, beauties arresting his delighted eye, from which he would have turned away with indifference or loathing;—emotions, till then unexperienced, awakened;—eye, and mind, and heart, fixed and fascinated. How the sudden change has come over him he cannot explain:—but it has come, *while* he was gazing on the landscape; so that there is a combination of the secret influence and the power of nature’s sublimities and beauties in producing it. The secret influence has not been exerted on the mind apart altogether from the scenery; but the scenery actually before the eye contributes, along with the influence, to beget the admiration of itself. That is, there are in the scenery itself the in-

redients that are fitted to produce admiration and pleasure; and it is while it is under the spectator's eye that the preternatural influence upon the mind, by imparting the taste for its sublimities and beauties, gives that fitness its appropriate effect, in their actual production.

On the *second* topic,—I did, as my friend states, then hold, and I do hold still, that the theory in question destroys human responsibility. I hold this conviction on grounds, into the examination of which my entering here is out of the question. I restrict myself, and that in a single sentence or two, to the one point touched upon by my friend. Man, when created, possessed, according to him, all that was necessary to accountableness, and *something more*. That something more was what he designates *moral power*. That moral power consisted in man's being *created holy*. *Holiness* stands in contradistinction to "moral pravity." Now it does seem to me manifest, that had it been within the range of the possible that a holy God should give being to an unholy creature,—that is, had the principles of "moral pravity" belonged to man's nature *as a creature*, he could not have been responsible for either the possession or the exercise of them. Belonging, on this supposition, to his nature as a creature, the exercise of them would only have been the following out of the design of his Creator. But, according to the theory of Dr. Williams, the holy affections of man's original nature were maintained in exercise by a constant supernatural influence. This influence God was not bound in equity to continue. It might be withdrawn, without affecting man's accountableness. Suppose it, then, withdrawn. What follows? The withdrawal of the influence is not the annihilation of the holy affections. They are there still. But man is left to himself, continuing, according to the theory, to possess all that is necessary to accountableness, and therefore still morally bound to maintain the exercise of those affections. Be it so. What is now his position? Is it simply *liability to fall*? If the theory went no further than this, I could understand the continuance of responsibility. But it does go further—much further. It affirms, not only *liableness to fall*, but the *necessity of falling*; and this necessity arising out of the creature's *very nature as a creature*! The passages to this effect in Dr. Williams are numerous and most



explicit; and the field of argument opened by them is wide and diversified. I keep to the one point. I might insist upon the inconsistency of admitting that man, when the Divine supporting influence is withdrawn, has his affections and dispositions still all holy,—and yet that in this holy creature there is, not only *liableness* to fall, but a *tendency to moral defection*, and a *necessity* of that tendency *terminating in defection*. I might argue, that if (as is admitted) there can be no unholiness, no guilt, but what is the result of *choice*, it is not easy to see,—it is to me anything but self-evident,—that a nature which is still *good*—that is, without any morally evil tendency—should necessarily *prefer evil*;—that what is *holy* should of itself choose to *sin*;—that what is *innocent* should, without extraneous temptation, spontaneously, and as the necessary result of its dependance as a creature, *become guilty*. It seems to be about as contradictory to suppose love choosing to hate and to become enmity, as to suppose hatred or enmity choosing to love and to become affection. But this is not the point in hand. It is rather this,—Whether the withholding of the supra-natural influence induces a *necessity of falling*; and whether such necessity *is consistent with responsibility*. Now, according to Dr. Williams, “if a rational creature be dealt with according to *equity*, IT WOULD BE EQUAL TO GOD HIMSELF, IF IT DID NOT FALL.”—“If defectible, and left in equity,—that is, enjoying nothing more than its real and strict due,—it does not in the least depend on the will of God whether he become thereby the subject of moral defect, any more than whether two and two make four rather than five; or whether a just inference be or be not connected with its premises.”—The justness of the distinction is generally admitted, between *natural* and *moral* ability and inability. There was no *moral* inability in man when created; for he was created holy:—there was no moral inability in man, when the supposed divinely supporting influence, or special favour not due in equity, was withdrawn; for he was still the subject of holy dispositions. The inability to maintain his righteousness, to continue obedient to God’s law, which this theory affirms, is as decidedly and perfectly a *natural* inability as it is possible to imagine. At least I must avow myself incapable of conceiving a natural inability more complete, than that which Dr. Williams pronounces inseparable from the nature of

every intelligent creature, considered simply as a creature in contradistinction to its Creator; an inability belonging to the creature as such, independently of the will of either creature or Creator,—an inability rendering it as impossible for the creature to avoid defection as for two and two to make five, or for the creature to become the Creator! If this be not *natural* inability, I profess myself unable to affix any definite idea to the terms. If the representation be true, the guilt of the sinning creature must lie in HIS BEING A CREATURE. The ground of responsibility to creatures belonging to a race already fallen and apostate is a distinct question,—a question involving no trivial difficulties,—the question respecting the transmission to Adam's posterity of the taint of moral pravity,—as well as of the Divine righteousness in subjecting them to suffering on account of his first sin. I am forgetting myself. The subject I have merely touched might be expanded, in its various bearings, into a volume.

I had written thus far, when I found another of our friend's epistles, of a date several years later. And, as it gives a very succinct and clear statement of his views at that period, on the former of the two topics just adverted to, I shall insert it, with a single sentence of remark. I give the letter entire.

EDINBURGH, Dec. 20th, 1818.

My dear Brother,

I embrace the opportunity afforded, by the visit of Mr. Bromily to your city, to inform you of our welfare. I found Mrs. P. much better, through mercy, than when you left Edinburgh; and also have felt less of my old complaint since my return, and would fain hope it is about to leave me. We have lost our friend Skae. He died on the morning of my return; so that I was not able to see him: but according to the accounts of all who did, he died in the possession of "a good hope through grace." May we, my brother, be enabled to continue and "finish our course with joy," and "the ministry which we have received of the Lord Jesus."

You will find, on the other side of this paper, a statement of my sentiments on the doctrine of Divine influence. I should be exceedingly obliged, if you would look it carefully over; and if we should differ at all, may I beg you to state wherein the difference consists. Independently of the instruction I hope to derive from it, it may be of considerable service to me at present.

1. I think it incorrect to call the Word of God *a dead letter*; because, *when understood and believed*, it worketh effectually, being efficacious to produce all the effects ascribed to it in the inspired volume.

2. I think the Spirit of God operates, not to render the truth effectual

*when understood and believed, but to impart a spiritual and believing view of it, and to preserve the mind in that state.*

3. I think that the influence of the Word is not the influence of the Spirit; but that ~~that~~ operation by which he renews and sanctifies the people of God is altogether distinct from the operation of Divine truth.

4. I think that that influence of the Spirit by which the eyes of sinners are opened to understand, and their hearts to receive, Divine truth, is not *in the truth itself*; ~~that~~ it does not flow into the mind, so to speak, with the truth; that it does not impart additional energy to the truth, and thereby render it effectual: but that it is exerted directly upon the mind, and is in the order of nature, previous to the influence of Divine truth.

5. I think that this influence is not exerted upon any one of the powers of the mind, as the understanding, affections, &c. &c., (for, though the mind is capable of knowing, and of being affected in different ways, I hold that it would be bad philosophy, as well as bad divinity, to represent it as composed of so many distinct powers,) but upon the mind itself, giving to it a new moral nature, qualifying it for new moral exercises, or for viewing spiritual objects differently, and of being affected towards them differently, when presented to its view.

To prevent misconceptions of my sentiments, I add,—though I apprehend it is scarcely necessary,—I have no idea that the Holy Spirit enlightens the understanding, or rectifies the affections, (understanding by these words the actual bestowment of correct views of Divine things in general, and the production of proper feelings towards them,) *without the Word*.

Neither do I apprehend that the influence of the Holy Spirit, which, as I contend, is previously necessary to the reception of Divine truth, is so in order of time, but of nature merely:—it is *while* the truth is presented, that the eyes are opened to perceive it.

If I mistake not, you will concur with me in all I have written, except in the statement numbered 5. Of your agreement with me here, I am not certain. Yet I know not that I mean more by it than you do by the *spiritual taste*, by which, you say, the glory of Divine things is perceived and relished.\*

I have a strong persuasion, that the *cold speculation* of many religionists in this country is greatly fostered by views of Divine influence which go to the resolving of it into the influence of Divine truth. I can hardly ask you, with your important engagements, to enter fully upon this subject; though it is one, in my judgment, of great interest and importance. But I should esteem it a particular favour, if you would state, at your earliest convenience, and as briefly as you choose, wherein you and I agree and differ, if differ we do at all.

With affectionate regards to Mrs. W., in which Mrs. Payne unites,

I am, my dear Brother,

Yours most affectionately,

GEO. PAYNE.

\* Referring to what I had said on the influences of the Holy Spirit, in "Discourses on the Socinian Controversy."

*I have only to say, that, but for the two sentences subjoined to his five propositions, it is likely I should have excepted a little (as he expected I might) to the terms of the last of the five.* But, taking the explanations into account contained in these sentences, the exception is deprived of so much at least of its ground as to become little more than the split of a metaphysical hair. I can subscribe, *ex animo*, to the statement.

And now I must leave an interval of many years to be filled up from other sources by his biographer, and pass at once to his last visit to Scotland, and especially to Glasgow. An extract from a letter or two which preceded his coming will both show the reader the occasion of his visit, and indicate his views on a point or two of some little interest in the discussions of our day.

PLYMOUTH, Dec. 21st, 1847.

My very dear Friend,

It seems likely now—unless my health should utterly fail—that I may have the high gratification of seeing you once more in the flesh. I pray God to permit the meeting. You are perhaps aware, that *your* Union invites me to be the delegate from *our* Union; and that I have consented, if ours will appoint me,—which, however, if they are wise, they will scarcely do, as I am somewhat of a broken-down vessel. If that should be the case, however, I shall spend one Sabbath in Glasgow, as the College Committee will allow me a fortnight. If the distance and expense were not so great, I would take my invaluable daughter with me; but that must be thought of a second time. \* \* \* \* \*

He then refers to certain letters between Dr. Vaughan and himself in the *Patriot*, on the Education question, and the consistency or inconsistency of dissenters accepting government aid in that department of benevolent effort,—and asks my judgment. The general nature of my brief reply will appear from what follows.

14, WYNDHAM PLACE, PLYMOUTH,  
Feb. 2nd, 1848.

My very dear Friend,

I am thankful to be able to say, that my general health is better than when the Committee of your Union applied to me; and that I have reason to hope I shall be able, with more comfort than I previously anticipated, to fulfil my engagement. At present, however, I have heard nothing from our Union. I have of course felt all along that, if requested, I must preach for you. I should have felt it treason against our old friendship to have made any engage-

ment which would prevent this. But I am quite free; and so I shall wish to remain, with the exception of preaching once for you, as I must try to make the journey tributary, if possible, to health. Thank you, and dear Mrs W.,—of whom I have so distinct and gratifying a recollection, in her coal-scuttle bonnet of thirty-years-ago fashion,—for your kind invitation. It would be a trial to me to go elsewhere. Indeed it is a melancholy reflection, that I scarcely know any one else; all old friends nearly gone. Well,—the comfort is, they have gone home; and we are following, to have a happy meeting above.

My dear Sarah shall come with me, *if I can make it out*, as they say here; but I am not sure that it will be practicable. We feel very much as strangers here. The removal has broken up old connexions. And the constant and heavy domestic afflictions we have had have rendered it difficult to form new ones. Added to which, new friends are not like old ones. I believe the removal has been good for the College; but not a comfort to me.

As to Education,—I do not dread Government influence so much as you; and should be willing to encounter the risk, to secure the benefit. All your conclusions, in the latter part of your letter, would be just, if we, who might possibly take aid for secular education, were not to separate the secular and the religious, but to blend them together. We should then clearly take aid for religious education, and violate the voluntary principle. But not so, if the secular is separated from the religious, and the latter provided for by voluntary effort. We think *this* may be done; and that, though some good might be lost, the advantages would predominate. From what I know of the state of this country, I utterly distrust the power—far more the will—of voluntary effort, to do all that is needed, and that WILL BE needed. The voluntary principle is, in England, staggering under the weight of religious effort:—if you throw upon it the burden of secular education, you will break its back.

Many thanks for your new Work. I have read it with high satisfaction. Seldom do I see any reason to disagree, or even to doubt.† \* \* \* With us, too commonly, sometimes the minister thinks *he* should reign,—sometimes *the church*, &c.:—how little does the Lord reign!

Best love to all your domestic circle.

My very dear Friend,

Very affectionately yours,

GEORGE PAYNE.

He came; and his daughter with him. Our only regret was our having at the time only one spare apartment, and our being thus denied the pleasure of having both under our roof. The little that we did see of her only inspired the wish to have seen more; and left us no room to wonder at the strong terms of esti-

† The volume on Congregational Independency; which was reviewed by Dr. Payne, in the *British Quarterly*.

mation and affection in which her father wrote and spoke of her. He himself was our guest. And to us, as to him, "it would have been a trial had he gone elsewhere." Delighted we were to have him again under our roof. It called back to remembrance the scenes of former days. And the remembrance, while pensive, was animated and cheerful. He was the old man. He retained all the suavity and warmth of a feeling heart. His jocoseness had not forsaken him, either in the recollections of the past or the enjoyment of the present. But the prevailing frame of his spirit was that of a sweetly subdued, serious, devout tenderness. It was that of one who evidently felt himself, as he expresses it above, "a broken-down vessel,"—of one who was looking forward to a speedily approaching close of his course below. He was a severe sufferer; passing nights of sleeplessness, or of broken and scanty rest, from nervous spasms in the limbs, and other painful affections. By the advice of an eminent medical friend in Edinburgh, whence he had just come,—a friend who has since joined him in heaven,\*—he used chloroform for abating the pain. But, whether from his using it too sparingly, through a natural timidity in regard to a new and untried process, or from whatever other cause, it had seemingly but very partial effect. He was uncomplainingly patient,—submissive to God's will, and waiting God's time. He was manifestly ripening for heaven. His public addresses, at the meetings of the Union and the Theological Academy, were characterized by the unction and earnestness of one whose own soul was pressed with the deeply-felt weight of spiritual interests, and of his own personal nearness to an eternal world. We cannot but look back on that visit with feelings of peculiar delight, and of gratitude to Divine Providence for having permitted us to enjoy it. Having seen our friend on the confines, as it afterwards turned out, of the "better country," we associate the then evident mellowness of preparation for it with its now perfected fruition. "He rests from his labours, and his works do follow him:"—and "the memory of the just is blessed."

\* One of the most excellent of "the excellent of the earth," the late Dr. William Beilby.



[FIRST SERIES.]

DIVINE EXISTENCE AND PERFECTIONS.





## INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.

Theology, meaning of:—sources of theological knowledge:—the division of Religion, into Natural and Revealed, improper:—admitting it, difficulties attending such a division:—its inutility:—one probable advantage conceded:—reasons for studying Theology in a systematic form:—objections answered:—it aids the acquisition of knowledge:—aids the communication of truth:—places the entire testimony of Scripture on any given subject before the mind.

§ 1. THE term *Theology*, as its derivation\* intimates, denotes that science which treats of God and of Divine things in general. And such being its nature, it must transcend in importance—and that to an incalculable degree—all other sciences to which the attention of man can be directed. These chiefly refer to matter,—that to mind; yea, the Infinite Mind. The cultivation of these may raise us to eminence and honour in the present state: the study of the other, if undertaken and conducted in a proper spirit, will prepare us for eternity.

§ 2. And there have been generally considered two sources from whence our knowledge of Theology is or may be derived; viz. the light of reason, and the light of Divine revelation,—a circumstance which has given

\* From the Greek word *Θεολογία*, which is compounded of the words *Θεός*, *God*, and *λογία*, *discourse*.

occasion to the common division of theological science into the two branches of Natural and Revealed Religion: the former comprising all that is or that may be discovered concerning God and Divine things in general by the powers of the human mind, unassisted by any express revelation from Heaven; and the latter comprehending all that may be gathered from that Book of Inspiration which the merciful providence of God has put into our hands. For more reasons than one, I am disposed to consider such a division injudicious and improper.

§ 3. In the first place, the inquiry as to the amount of assistance we may derive or have derived from the light of nature, in the prosecution of our theological investigations, will be found to be one which it is exceedingly difficult, if not impossible to answer. That there is what may not improperly be called Natural Religion, *i. e.* that there are theological truths which the human mind, unaided by a written revelation from God, might attain to the knowledge of, were its powers exercised aright, there can be no doubt. The works of nature and of providence, though they reveal—partially at least—the God of nature and providence, yet they leave *some* of his perfections in a thick shade of obscurity, and bring *none* of them so prominently and gloriously into view as the volume of Divine truth. “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.” “The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.”\* If no knowledge of God—of the relations we sustain to him,

\* Psalm xix. 1, 2; Rom. i. 20.

and of the obligations and duties which naturally and necessarily spring out of these relations—could be gathered from the works of nature, I do not see how it could be said that the conduct of the heathen, who possess not the written word, will be found to be without excuse at the day of judgment. Where there is no law, there can be no transgression; and where there are no possible means of knowing the law, there can be no guilt incurred by acting in opposition to its requirements. If then there were no such thing as Natural Religion—no light whatever afforded by the works of nature as to our duty to God and to each other—no man destitute of the written revelation could be justly charged with personal crime. I do not say that the burden of original guilt would not even then rest upon him, but nothing else would; and if condemned at the great day of account, the ground of his condemnation would necessarily be, not what he himself had done, but what had been done by his fallen head. Yet, though the denial of Natural Religion—as it has been called—involves absurdity, though we are sure there must be what may not improperly be so denominated, it is a very different, and it may prove a very difficult thing to place our finger upon it, with a feeling of full and entire confidence that we have committed no mistake. That the human intellect, exercising aright the high faculties with which she has been distinguished, might have carried us to a certain distance in the discovery of duty is undoubted; but how far she could have enabled us to go is, I apprehend, by no means certain. Beyond all question, she must have been inadequate to conduct us so far in the line of discovery as the written word is able to do; or why, since Jehovah does nothing in vain, should he have sent his written word to us? And if it

be difficult to calculate how far she *could* have enabled us, it is greatly more difficult to say how far she *would* have enabled us to go. How can we be sure that she would have been disposed to exercise her faculties aright, so as to take advantage of the assistance afforded by the light of nature! We certainly have no better rule to assist us in calculating what she might have done than to examine what she has done. And I am very strongly disposed to think that an attentive examination of the moral state of those nations, both in ancient and modern times, who have not enjoyed the benefit of Divine revelation, will leave us in doubt whether the unassisted powers of the human mind would, in point of fact, have carried their possessor even to the threshold of the great building we are about to explore—whether they would have discovered the *foundation* of all theological science,—that great truth which, if any one in moral science should be so denominated, deserves to be called an axiomatical truth, viz. THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

§ 4. But, secondly, I do not see what great *benefit* is to be derived from separately treating of Natural and Revealed Religion. Suppose we could ascertain the precise boundaries of each,—suppose we could point out, with the utmost degree of precision, what truths in theological science the light of nature is able to discover, and to what extent she can unfold and elucidate them, and so draw up one system of Theology formed by the aid of reason merely, and another by the assistance of Divine revelation,—what valuable and important end would be answered by it? Should we gain a perfect system of Divinity and of moral science by this method? I am disposed to reply to the question in the negative. We are fully aware that the first of the two supposed systems would be an imperfect one. And

with regard to the other, there are some truths, it may be observed, which Divine revelation takes for granted. It does not set out, for instance, by affirming and proving the being of a God—the foundation-truth,—but by instructing us in what manner he employed himself in the beginning; thereby intimating that his own existence is capable of other, previous, and independent proof.

§ 5. This is no disparagement to the fulness and sufficiency of Divine revelation. Of the great truth—*there is a God*—competent and adequate evidence he had given in the works of his hands. There was therefore no occasion and no propriety in making it the subject of additional and formal proof in the volume of his grace. Instead of treating of Natural and Revealed Religion separately, it is surely self-evidently better, therefore, to avail ourselves of the blended light of both, and, by the assistance of their united splendour, to frame for ourselves a system of theological science,—remembering, however, that reason's ray can add but little to the illumination of Divine truth. The most important advantage which at present strikes me, as likely to be gained by drawing up a system of Natural Religion as it is called, is to obtain a clearer view of that rule—*“as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law”*—by which the heathen will be judged at the great day of account. As the Judge of all the earth cannot but do right, he will try every delinquent by that rule of conduct which he enjoyed, or to the knowledge of which he might have attained. Let it rather be our care, instead of employing ourselves in an attempt to define the rule by which others will be judged, to ascertain clearly and distinctly that by which we ourselves are to be judged; and let it be our constant and earnest prayer that we may find mercy of the Lord in that day.

§ 6. But why attempt to present religious truth, it will perhaps be said, in a systematic form at all? Is it so presented at the grand fountain or storehouse of religious truth, the Bible? We readily answer in the negative. In the Scriptures there is no systematic arrangement like what we witness in our bodies of Divinity, as they are technically called, the doctrines being carefully separated from the moral precepts of our holy religion, and those of the same class all placed together, and discussed before it is broken or divided by the introduction of any other subject. Nothing of this is to be found in the Bible: and since holy men of old spoke what they were moved, and as they were moved to speak by the Holy Ghost, it has been thought by some that to exhibit religious truth in a systematic order is injudicious, if not decidedly injurious; while by others all attempts of the kind have been scornfully treated as absurd, and in the highest degree ludicrous.

§ 7. There are, however, important reasons for this want of systematic arrangement in the Scriptures, and which will be found not to bear in the slightest degree against the practice, considering the purposes for which we use it. The Bible is altogether a practical book. It was not designed to lodge certain dogmas, merely, in the understanding, but primarily to amend the heart and regulate the conduct. All its principles or doctrines are entirely of a practical nature and tendency; and the ultimate object for the attainment of which the belief of them was enjoined upon us is the practical influence they will exert upon us, or more ultimately the glory which will redound to God from the important moral change they are adapted to effect upon our characters. This is too important a remark to be forgotten. If the doctrines of God's word consist in mere specula-

tion, if it were possible to build up its primary truths and elements in the understanding, and to imprison them there, and not allow them to exert their benign influence in smoothing the rugged tempers, and softening the hard hearts, and correcting the immoral practices of men, what good would after all be effected? We should have frustrated the grand purpose for which they were communicated to the world. No conceivable good purpose would be accomplished by converting a man to the faith, and not to the spirit of Christianity,—by giving him a believing head, while he retains an infidel and a depraved heart.

§ 8. And as the Bible is altogether a practical book, so it was designed for the great body of mankind. Unlike many systems of philosophy, which were only adapted to the learned and initiated, unto the poor the gospel was intended to be preached; and therefore it was especially fitted, as to the mode of communication, for their benefit. And to secure this adaptation to the great body of mankind, it seems requisite that the systematic mode should have been, as it actually has been, rejected. Had the doctrines of the Bible been exhibited by themselves, and the duties by themselves, as in our bodies of Divinity, it is probable that many a reader might not have seen the connection between the two. There would have been more danger that its primary truths would have been considered merely in the light of dogmas to be believed, instead of moral instruments or means of turning the soul to God. To prevent this deplorable result, God has exhibited in the Bible the truths or principles of Christianity in connection with the feelings they should inspire, and the conduct to which they should lead; and thus he has more effectually secured the interests of experimental and practical godliness, and has shown—in opposition



to those who, as it is, are very desirous of putting asunder what God has joined—the inseparable connection between the parts of our holy religion. Considering the great object of God in the bestowment of the Bible, and the individuals for whom it was designed, I cannot but think that much wisdom is displayed in the *manner* in which its truths are communicated to us. Had the intention of the Bible been merely to train up men for the work of the ministry, the case I conceive might have been different. But it was not so. Its grand object was to prepare mankind generally—the poorest, the most debased and illiterate—for the glories of eternity; and therefore it received a special adaptation as to the mode of conveying its communications to this its paramount intention. The good of the many was not sacrificed for the benefit of the few; but the benefit of the few was held in subordination, as it should have been, to the welfare of the many.

§ 9. But though, for the great body of mankind, that mode of stating truth which we observe in the Bible is better adapted than any other to secure the purposes for which its truths have been communicated to us, and though it can scarcely be doubted that in a spiritual point of view this mode of stating it is better for all of us, yet it can be as little questioned that to study Theology in a systematic manner has important advantages for students and ministers, and indeed for all who would obtain an accurate and comprehensive acquaintance with the Christian system in all its parts, bearings, and connections. It aids them in the acquisition and in the communication of truth.

§ 10. FIRST.—*It aids them in its acquisition; and it is likely to impress a greater character of accuracy upon the views and opinions they may ultimately form than would*

*otherwise be the case.* How, indeed, can we ascertain the amount of instruction conveyed by the Scriptures, with reference to any point to which our inquiries are directed, without collecting together all the passages in which mention is made of it in the word of God? And what is this but to arrange and systematize, if I may so speak? And as some declarations in the volume of Divine truth, susceptible it may be of different interpretations, are understood one way, at variance with other declarations, how can we form a correct conception of the Bible as a whole,—how can we gain a just view of any one of its doctrines even, but by bringing together all those parts which treat of it? And thus guarding ourselves against the misconceptions—or rather, perhaps, exaggerated conceptions—into which we might have fallen by the examination of one of those parts merely by the examination of all the rest, I cannot but think that some men of great name in the literary theological world of the present day are manifesting a most improper, and to themselves, as well as to their hearers, a most injurious contempt of system; and that they would be much better divines, and not a whit less useful men, if they would sink in some degree their high pretensions, and condescend to avail themselves of the assistance with which departed and contemporary worth and genius and talents could supply them. There is a sense, I freely admit, in which a slavish regard to system is very much to be deprecated. To make any part of the word of God manifestly to bend to a system or creed, without sufficient regard to the Scriptures, can scarcely be sufficiently condemned; but to make one text in the Bible bend to a multitude of others, or rather to make the unequivocal meaning of a legion of passages a guide to direct us with reference to the meaning of one which

admits of a double explanation, is self-evidently consistent with every principle of just interpretation, with common sense, and with the word of God itself. If by system be meant an arrangement of the various doctrines, &c. of our holy religion, with a view to ascertain and to convey the amount of scriptural information we possess with reference to each, there cannot be too slavish a regard to system. And no man can be an enemy to system thus explained, who possesses a proper sense of the importance of Divine truth; for if truth be the basis of our justification and sanctification too, as it is,—or, in other words, if we are both justified and sanctified by the belief of the truth,—is it not manifest that, while a considerable error in our system may endanger the former, it must in the very nature of things proportionably affect the latter. It is by the views of the mind,—views doubtless the result of Divine influence, but still views of truth, as truth is exhibited to us in the inspired volume; for the Holy Spirit gives no new revelation, but gives to those upon whom he exerts his influence a proper conception of the meaning of the old,—it is, I say, by the views of the mind that we are sanctified, understanding by that term the purification of the affections—the restricted sense commonly attached to it: so that if those views are in any measure incorrect, *i.e.* if our system be in any degree erroneous, our affections must be in a corresponding degree erroneous also, if you will allow the expression; that is, they must either be misdirected, or, if placed on proper objects, they will be found lacking in ardour and permanence. But—

§ 11. SECONDLY.—*To study Theology systematically will aid in the communication of truth.* Generally speaking, the facility we possess in communicating what we know

to others will be in proportion to our own knowledge. What we thoroughly understand, we shall be able to exhibit clearly and fully to others, and to convey to them a thorough understanding of it; and, on the other hand, an imperfect conception of any subject can only originate a lame and obscure and feeble exhibition of it. Give but to the teacher of Theology a perfect comprehension of what he is about, and I will answer for his making his way to the understanding, if not the consciences of his hearers.

§ 12. Now to study Theology systematically must, on these principles, aid in the communication of truth. A careful comparison of apparently conflicting passages, or conflicting doctrines, cannot fail to give us a more definite and clear and accurate conception of their meaning. It is astonishing how very loose and vague are the notions entertained by many men—and many preachers too—with reference to some very important points of Divine truth. And not more astonishing, I may add, than disgraceful. Ignorance of the important principles of his profession is always considered disgraceful to the lawyer or the physician. How much more dishonourable to the theologian! And this prevalence of those loose and vague notions, to which I have just referred, I am disposed to trace, in a considerable degree at least, to a want of attention to Theology as a system. As I desire to guard you against the rock on which they have split, I would earnestly entreat your attention to the statements which I shall hereafter have to lay before you. “A good divine,” says one, “is far superior to a mere composer of sermons. He will have a greater fulness of thought, and a more commanding view of his subjects.” I am convinced also, that the systematic study of Theology will tend to give a vigour

and firmness to your statements of truth, as much removed from offensive dogmatism on the one hand, as from weakness and hesitation on the other. Without comprehensive acquaintance with the subject on which we speak, in all its bearings and connections, we are apt to get into a most offensive and ignorant dogmatism, floundering on from one contradiction to another, pulling down this half-hour that which we built up the preceding one; or, we should be perhaps afraid, on the other hand, of opening our mouth, lest the second breath should gainsay the first, and convince our hearers that their teacher knows little or nothing about the matter. It is very desirable that a minister should be fully sensible of what he is about, that he should feel his ground, that he should be aware of the dangers on either hand of him. This will give him, though a prudent, a firm step. He will not be obliged to be impudent to prove that he is not empty, nor hesitating to show he is not heedless and rash.

In addition to these reasons for presenting Divine truth to you in a systematic form, it may be stated that in this manner all its parts are brought under the review of the student, and brought *regularly* under his review. His attention is directed to the whole of Christianity; and he is not suffered to go forth to the world in the character of a stated minister of the gospel, before all the branches of that system which he is to teach have been examined under the eye, and with the assistance which his teacher may be able to afford him.

## LECTURE II.

### EXISTENCE OF GOD.

This doctrine the foundation of all religion:—definition of:—the importance of the subject:—mistakes:—atheism:—the knowledge of God not traceable to the light of nature, but revelation:—*postulata*:—The argument of Dr. Bentley:—the conviction that there is a God, almost universal, forming the ground of the highest degree of probability in favour of this doctrine.

§ 1. CHRISTIANITY naturally separates itself into two grand divisions, the *doctrinal* and the *preceptive*. This will accordingly form the basis of the general division in the following course of lectures. I am aware that there is not, perhaps, so broad a line of distinction here as at first sight we are disposed to imagine. For every doctrine infers an obligation, and every precept implies a doctrine; yet still the line is broad and perceptible enough for our purpose. To arrange and classify the doctrine of Scripture is not so easy a task. I propose to consider in the following course some of the doctrines which relate to God,—HIS EXISTENCE and PERFECTIONS or ATTRIBUTES.

§ 2. The present lecture will be devoted to a consideration of the evidence in support of a doctrine which is the foundation of all religion; viz. that the whole of

the material universe is the production of a Being whose existence is underived—who is the great cause of all things, but is himself uncaused—who directs and controls every event that takes place, but is himself directed and controlled by none—who exists by absolute necessity of nature, and is consequently independent, immutable, omnipotent, omnipresent, and in short possessed of those perfections which we have been accustomed to attribute to the eternal and invisible God.

§ 3. This doctrine, you will observe, is at the foundation of all religion: for what is religion? The answer is naturally and truly suggested by the etymology of the word, viz. *religare*, to bind,—that is, *religion is the connexion and intercourse of man with his Maker*. It consists in those feelings of reverence and humility, and fear and gratitude, and love and adoration, which the relation subsisting between them peremptorily calls for on his part, and in the worship and obedience which constitute the natural expressions of such a state of mind. Were there no God, there could be no such thing as religion; and, in like manner, where the doctrine which affirms his existence is denied, there can be none. As well might we look for weight and motion in bodies, if the principle of attraction were annihilated, as set out in quest of religion in a world of atheists. The foundation-stone of all religion is the doctrine of the Divine existence; and when and where that sinks, the whole fabric must sink with it.

§ 4. I may also observe, in passing, that the admission of this important sentiment is not more essential to the existence of any kind of religion, than proper conceptions of his character are necessary to the possession of the religion. Where the true God is unknown or denied, there may indeed be something called religion;

but it must inevitably be a false religion, since the affections of the heart, in which the essence of religion consists, must in the nature of things correspond with the conceptions which are formed of the object of worship,—so that the adorations which are paid to the objects of pagan worship can be nothing better than a degraded and destructive superstition.

§ 5. Nor can I leave this part of the subject without requesting you to observe the influence which every mistake into which men may fall, with reference to the Divine character, will produce upon the character of their religion. By beholding the glory of God, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory. Every defect in our perception of that glory must proportionally affect our transformation. To deny this is to deny the inseparable connection and correspondence between the views and feelings of our minds; and it is presumed that no one, who is not profoundly ignorant of the most obvious of the mental phenomena, will venture to do this. The character of God is the seal,—religion is the impression which that seal produces upon us; and though it may be difficult to trace and exhibit the exact influence which any mistake concerning the Divine character must produce either upon the kind or degree of religious feeling, it is not more absurd to deny that such an influence is exerted, than to contend that lines may be added to or taken from the seal without altering the impression it leaves upon the wax.

§ 6. With much practical, there is very little speculative atheism in the world. Indeed, I very much doubt whether there is, or ever has been, such a being as a speculative atheist. An honest atheist we know there cannot be. Infidelity, in all its grades, has its origin not in the perversion of the intellect, but the moral obliquity



of the heart. Your grand business will be to rouse men from that state of practical forgetfulness of God in which they would fain continue: to this you will have to summon all your energies. The demon of speculative atheism may never come across your path. Still a course of Theological Lectures might, with some colour of justice, be censured as incomplete, if they did not present the student with the evidence on which we rest our unwavering conviction that there is a God. This evidence I consequently proceed to lay before you.

§ 7. I intimated in the preceding lecture a doubt, whether that knowledge which is found to exist generally amongst mankind with reference to the Divine existence is, in point of fact, to be traced to the information which nature and reason afford upon this subject. I am strongly disposed to think that this is not the case; but, on the contrary, that from the light of revelation, lingering after the sun itself had set, in those faint and obscure traditions which have well nigh overspread the world, all that the human race actually know upon the subject has been derived. Still reason does teach the being of God. The sacred writers do not set themselves to prove this great truth,—a circumstance which decidedly teaches us that the invisible things of God since the creation of the world may be clearly seen, being rendered manifest by those which do appear. In the prosecution of this subject, I shall not aim at originality, but endeavour to give you, in as close and consecutive a manner as I am able, either in my own words or in the words of others, a statement of the argument on which this foundation-truth of all moral science rests.

§ 8. To prove the existence of God, we need no *postulata* but the two following: viz. *that something beyond all question exists at present*; and, *that in the universe there*

*are to be found unequivocal marks of contrivance and design.* For—

FIRST.—As something now exists, something must have existed from all eternity; or we are reduced to the following dilemma,—viz. either that which now exists must have sprung out of, or been created by nothing, or it must have been created by itself. Both parts of this dilemma are self-evidently absurd. If there had consequently ever been a time in which nothing existed, nothing would have existed at the present day; but this is contrary to fact. We have then advanced to the conclusion that, as something now exists, something must have existed from all eternity; for that the universe could have sprung up accidentally, by chance, or without any cause of its existence either within or without itself, is an absurdity as great as to affirm that the half is equal to the whole of anything. And it having been proved that something has existed from all eternity, we proceed now to another undoubted step in our progress; for we are reduced to the necessity of supposing, since this is the case, either that there is some one independent being who exists by absolute necessity of nature, and has imparted existence to all other beings and things, or that matter is eternal—that things have for ever proceeded as we see them now proceeding—that the present race of animal and vegetable existences derived their being from some previous similar existences—those again from others yet more remote, and so on in an infinite series of caused and successive beings. In other words, we are reduced to the necessity of admitting that there is a God, or that there has been a constant succession of men, and plants, and animals in the world from eternity. Now if this eternal succession of derived and dependent beings did not involve an absurdity,—of

which, however, I shall say more presently,—I think it might fairly be put to the decision of common sense, whether it is not in itself more probable that all finite beings have derived their existence from one infinite being, in whom existence is a necessary attribute, than that the present generation of men sprang from a preceding one—that again from another which existed before it—this third from one yet more remote, and so on from all eternity. Which of these two suppositions—one of which we must of necessity adopt—is encumbered with the fewest difficulties? What peculiar advantage is gained by attempting to get rid of the necessity for believing that there is one self-existent being in the universe, by the notable expedient of conjuring up an infinite series of derived and dependent beings? Who would not, even if the latter supposition were an admissible one,—who would not, I say, even in that case, prefer the former? But it is not an admissible supposition.

§ 9. It involves absurdity, as may be shown in various ways. The learned and acute Dr. Bentley endeavours to show its absurdity by the following arguments, amongst others.

1. All the generations of men, in an infinite series, must have been at one time present; and then one of the individuals in the series must have existed at an infinite distance from us. His son, who may be supposed to have been forty years younger, was either at an infinite or a finite distance from us. If at an infinite, then the infinite distance of the father was forty years longer than the infinite distance of the son. If the son was at a finite distance from us, then forty years added to a finite distance will make it infinite. There is much ingenuity and apparent conclusiveness in

this argument; but, although it might be difficult, from the obscurity which necessarily attaches to all our inquiries with reference to eternal duration, to point out the exact point in which the argument halts, I still hesitate about its validity. Might it not be turned against the eternal existence of the great First Cause himself? Might we not construct an argument in the following manner? Forty years ago Jehovah must have existed during a limited or an unlimited period. If during an unlimited period, then the eternity which looks back from the present moment is greater than that which looked back forty years ago. If, on the contrary, he had existed only for a limited period, then forty years added to a finite period will make up an infinite one. Now an argument which seems to bear with as much force against the eternal existence of God as against the supposition of an infinite series of finite and dependent beings can, with no fairness, be urged in support of the former.

2. Another argument of this ingenious writer is, I apprehend, more valid. It is as follows. In an infinite series of derived and dependent beings, the number of men who have already existed must be of course infinite; but the number of their eyes must be twice, the number of their fingers ten times, and the number of the hairs on their heads many thousand times as great as the number of men, *i. e.* it is possible for one infinite number to be many thousand times greater than another infinite number, which is absurd.

3. A still more decided and incontrovertible proof of the absurdity of supposing an infinite series of derived and dependent beings is thus stated by another excellent writer. "Each individual in such a series is an unit. But every collection of units, however great, is,

with intuitive certainty; numerable, and therefore cannot be infinite." I have never yet seen anything which deserved to be called an attempt even to overthrow this reasoning. Every individual in such a series has only a limited duration; but no additions to limited durations, of limited duration, can make up an infinite one. An endless addition of parts may be supposed; but an infinite sum of parts which have actually had existence is a self-contradiction.

4. The supposition of an infinite series of derived and dependent beings is absurd, because it runs counter to what is universally admitted to be an axiom both in moral and physical science, viz. that nothing can exist without an adequate cause of its existence. There must be something wrong in the construction of that mind which hesitates to admit the truth of the assertion, that every effect supposes and requires a sufficient cause, when at least the full meaning of the assertion is perceived. I need not therefore attempt any defence of the axiom itself. But it deserves your attentive observation, that the supposition of an infinite series of derived and dependent beings is a manifest attempt, on the part of those who advocate it, to rescue themselves from the charge of contradicting the axiom which has just been stated. Something they cannot deny exists now; and it would be too absurd to allege that it sprang out of accident or chance. For what is chance? It is nothing. It is only another name for human ignorance. The present race of men and animals must have had a cause. Whence did they spring? Oh! replies the atheist,—like the Irish girl, who answered her interrogator respecting the leaves of the tree—that the branches made the leaves—the stump the branches—the earth the stump—the mud the earth,—Oh! replies the atheist, the pre-

sent race of men and animals derived their existence from a previous race. But from where did *they* spring? we again ask. From a preceding one, we are told,—that from one more remote,—the fourth from the third,—the third from the second; and since it is manifest that the same inquiry might be put concerning the first, which could no more exist without a cause than any of the succeeding ones, there is obviously no method of getting out of the difficulty, that, with reference to the first in the series, we see an effect without a cause, but by denying that there was any first, or affirming that the series has been eternal. This, therefore, the atheist does. Now with reference to this statement, I beg you particularly to observe that it leaves the grand difficulty unsolved. The inquiry is not only how each individual in the series came into existence, it is how the whole series came into existence. Supposing the sorrow a very common illustration—a chain hung down out of the heavens, from an unknown height, and for which inquiry was made what supported the link immediately above our heads. It might perhaps be sufficiently replied that it was kept from falling by the one directly over it. This answer would be further sufficient to explain the reason why any particular link in the chain remains suspended; but would it show how the whole chain remains suspended? This is the grand difficulty. There is no mystery concerning the way in which the separate links are supported: the mystery is how the whole is supported. Since each link is dependent, the whole chain must be so. There must be some cause for the chain remaining in a state of suspension, or we have an effect without a cause. Just so is it with reference to an infinite series of derived and dependent beings. The inquiry is how the whole series—and not how any par-

ticular individual in it—came into existence; and unless we can find a cause for its existence, either in or out of itself, the supposition of such a series involves absurdity, inasmuch as it contradicts the axiom that every effect must have a cause. I deny then that such a supposed series can have any cause, either extrinsic to itself or within itself: not the former, because this supposed series includes in it all beings and things that are or ever were in existence; and not the latter, because every being in the series is a derived and dependent being. The whole series must therefore partake of the same character. A part of the series is daily cut off; and, for the same reason, the whole of it might be cut off. Such a supposed series can have no cause of existence within itself, as the whole or a part of the series be self—to admit. To talk of the series itself—apart from supposes which constitute it—being self-existent is, at the best, nonsense; and to affirm that the individual need not of which the series is composed are self-existent. But say that none of them were born, and that none of them can die, or to utter what is contradicted by every day's experience. The supposition, therefore, of an infinite series of derived and dependent beings involves absurdity, because it contradicts the axiom that every effect must have an adequate cause.

§ 10. Our argument, as yet, in support of the existence of a great First Cause has rested on the fact, that the supposition of one self-existent being is necessary to account for the simple existence of all other beings. I now add—

SECONDLY.—That if this be denied, it will be impossible to give any rational and intelligent account of those marks of contrivance and design with which the universe abounds. That there are such, you are well

aware. They overspread every part of the vast creation of God. The human frame is full of them. The eye is formed with admirable skill for the purpose of sight,—the ear for the purpose of hearing. This is obvious to all. But in the bodily structure of man there are innumerable contrivances of which the uneducated are completely unaware, and probably many which the most diligent and skilful of our anatomists have passed over. Now the circumstance that there are such marks of contrivance and design is a fact to be accounted for. We are as irresistibly impelled to inquire how man came to be possessed of organs so obviously and admirably adapted to perform certain functions, as to put the question how he came to exist at all. “The question,” says an able writer, “is not simply how came the first man into existence; which question it might be pretended is done away, by supposing the series of men springing from one another to have been infinite, and consequently to have had no such first, for which it was necessary to provide a cause.” This perhaps would have been nearly the state of the question, if there had been nothing before us but an unorganized, unmechanized substance, without mark or indication of contrivance. It might be difficult to show—at least more difficult to show—that such substance could not have existed from eternity, either in succession—if it were possible, which I think it is not, for unorganized bodies to spring from one another—or by individual perpetuity. But the question which irresistibly presses upon the mind is,—Whence this contrivance and design? Were we to allow to the atheist—which, however, we do not—that he has sufficiently accounted for the *existence* of the human race, by stating that one generation has sprung from another *ad infinitum*, he would still have to account for



the innumerable marks of contrivance which that race, as well as many other beings, exhibits. The thing required is the intending mind, the adapting hand, the intelligence by which that hand was directed. Man is a complex machine, and of his own construction a partially unintelligent machine. To allege that he proceeds from another machine, as unintelligent as himself, does not surely destroy the necessity for inquiring into the cause of the skill which his construction evinces. Though he does proceed from another machine, contrivance must still have had a contriver. That other machine may, in like manner, have proceeded from a former machine; nor does that alter the case,—contrivance must have had a contriver. That former machine from one preceding it: no alteration still: a contriver is still necessary. No tendency is perceived, no approach, towards a diminution of this necessity. It is the same with any and every succession of these machines. A succession of ten, of a hundred, of a thousand, with one series as with another,—a succession which is finite, with one which is infinite. In whatever other respects they may differ, in this they do not,—in all equally contrivance and design are unaccounted for.

§ 11. I have now gone through our direct proofs of the existence of a great First Cause of all things.\* I cannot, however, pass from the subject without observing that powerful evidence in support of the probability of this fundamental truth is supplied us by the almost universal prevalence of the conviction that there is a God; and that such a conviction prevails is undoubted. It makes no difference to my argument that the most erroneous conceptions have been too generally entertained with reference to his character and perfections; for while ignorant of his nature, they may have acknow-

ledged his existence,—and that they did so, the universal prevalence of idolatry is decided proof. Now how comes it to pass that mankind, in every age of the world, in all latitudes, and in every stage of human society—whether free or enslaved—whether elevated and polished by education, or sunk into a condition bordering upon brutality—whether frozen under Lapland skies, or scorched by the burning beams of a vertical sun,—how comes it to pass, I say, that all—all, with a very few exceptions—have acknowledged the existence of a great First Cause? Could this universal conviction have been reared on any basis which was not sufficiently strong for its permanent support? If we knew of any other sentiment which prevailed as universally as the conviction to which we are now referring, should we not immediately suppose that there must be powerful evidence in support of it to be found somewhere, whether it had appeared to us or not? For my own part, I freely acknowledge, I find it much easier to believe that there is a God, than that all mankind have been given up to believe a lie. Many important practical remarks are suggested by the subject to which I have called your attention: I refrain, however, from stating them now, as a more favourable opportunity for introducing them will, in all probability, occur in the course of our lectures on the perfections and works of God.

## LECTURE III.

### NATURAL PERFECTIONS OF GOD—SELF-EXISTENCE AND IMMUTABILITY.

Substance of former lecture stated:—classification of the Divine attributes—self-existence and eternity of God, definition of:—taught by reason:—taught by Scripture:—immutability:—distinction between self-existence and immutability:—difference between the immutability of God and that ascribed to creatures:—objections to the immutability of God stated and answered:—lessons.

§ 1. HAVING shown in our last lecture that something must have existed from all eternity, and that the supposition of an infinite series of derived and dependent beings involves absurdity, it follows as a necessary consequence that there exists one independent being,—a being who has the cause of his existence in himself—who has imparted existence to all other beings—and is, in short, the exclusive cause of all being and blessedness. This glorious being—to whom we give the name of God, and who ought never to be thought of—and much less approached—by us without the most profound veneration and awe, and gratitude and self-abasement,—this glorious being, I say, is necessarily possessed of various attributes, to the consideration of which I now proceed to direct your attention.

§ 2. Most writers on the Divine attributes divide them into two classes. The first comprehends what are called his *natural*, and the second his *moral perfections*. This classification is obviously a proper one. There is a broad line of distinction between intellectual and physical powers, and that tendency of mind or disposition under the controlling influence of which their energy is put forth. And this is precisely the difference which exists between the natural and moral perfections of the great First Cause of all things. Eternity, immutability, omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence are manifestly physical excellences—physical powers. They are instruments in the hands of rectitude and goodness, and employed in executing their gracious determinations.

§ 3. IN THE FIRST PLACE,—the great God must be *self-existent and eternal*. I place the eternity and self-existence of God together, not because the words convey by any means the same idea, but because the attributes denoted thereby are so inseparably connected—so clearly and necessarily involved in each other, if I may so say—that it is difficult to treat of them separately. We need only to enunciate the following proposition, to secure for it the assent of all who understand the meaning of the terms in which it is couched. A self-existent being must necessarily be eternal; and, *vice versâ*, a being who is eternal must necessarily be self-existent. Let me then, *First*, endeavour to fix as accurately as possible the meaning of the terms I have now used; and then to show that the great and glorious object of our worship is beyond all question an eternal and self-existent being.

When we say, then, that Jehovah is a self-existent being, we do not mean that he was the author of his own existence, or that he was produced by himself.

Were that the case, the great First Cause of all other things might not have existed—nay, could not have existed from eternity,—contrary to the strongest and most unequivocal declarations of the word of God. It is just as easy to conceive that we could have created ourselves, as that another being—immeasurably superior to us it may be granted—could first bring himself into existence, and then give existence to a world of other beings. That no being could be produced by itself is an assertion as self-evidently true when used with reference to the Creator as to all inferior existences.

§ 4. Nor, when we say that Jehovah is a self-existent being, do we mean that he exists without any cause at all. Some appear to have fallen into this mistake. But—as the prince of reasoners on this subject has stated—“that the first cause can have no other being prior to it is self-evident. But if originally, absolutely, and antecedently to all supposition of existence, there be no necessary ground or reason why the first cause does exist rather than not exist,—if the first cause can rightly and truly be affirmed to exist, absolutely, without any ground or reason of existence at all,—it will unavoidably follow, by the same argument, that it may as well cease likewise to exist, without any ground or reason of ceasing to exist; which is absurd. The truth therefore plainly is, whatever is the true reason why the first cause can never possibly cease to exist, the same is—and originally and always was—the true reason why it always did and cannot but exist,” and is still the true ground and reason of its existence.

What has been said will prepare you for the following statement of what we mean by self-existence as an attribute of the glorious Jehovah. The phrase imports, then, that he exists by absolute necessity of nature,—

by a necessity which is antecedent, not indeed to his being, but to all our conceptions of his being, and so forms the ground or reason of his existence. The phrase imports that this cause of existence is in himself; so that he may very fitly be described as he has been, as necessarily existing of and from himself, with all actual perfection originally in his own essence.

The proper notion of eternity as an attribute of the Divine Being is exhibited by the apostle John, when he says of one of the Persons of the Godhead that "he was, and is, and is to come." The eternity of God is one permanent state, without succession: it is one long, unbroken line, though we are accustomed to conceive of it as divided into two parts—that which has passed, and that which is to come. The eternity of God is God always existing.

§ 5. *Secondly.*—We proceed to show what reason we have to believe that the glorious object of our worship is, beyond all question, an eternal and self-existent being. To this conclusion we are necessarily led by the reasoning of the former lecture; for if something must have existed from all eternity, and if that something cannot have been an infinite series of derived and dependent beings, there must have been some one being who has imparted existence to all others. This being must have been eternal and self-existent,—eternal, because if there had ever been a time in which he did not exist, he could not exist at present; and self-existent, because with reference to such a being—a being is supposed who existed from eternity, and to have imparted existence to all others—there is no conceivable ground of existence but this. The First Cause must of necessity be himself uncaused by anything out of himself. We reject the idea of an infinite series, because, since every individual

in the series is a dependent being, the whole series must be dependent, as well as each separate link; and we are driven by absolute necessity to suppose that there is one infinite, self-existent being in the universe—the Creator of all things—who exists by absolute necessity of nature. We are driven, I say, by necessity to repose in this conviction; for the more frequently any man contemplates the subject, the more firmly, I verily believe, will he be convinced that there is no medium between the acknowledgment of one self-existent being, and the denial that there is any being in the universe—or rather the denial that there is any universe,—that the testimony of the senses and the evidence of consciousness are in the slightest degree to be depended upon,—and that the myriads of beings whom we fancy we see around us, or that we ourselves—our own feelings and perceptions—are anything more real and substantial than the shadowy and fleeting visions of the night.

And though the eternity of God, as we have just seen, may be rested on separate and independent ground, it necessarily flows from the admission of the self-existence of God. A being who exists by absolute necessity of nature must have always existed; for to speak of a time when he began to be is, in effect, to say that when he rose into existence he did not necessarily begin to exist, since necessity is uniform in its operations: and for the same reason he must always continue to exist; for to suppose that he might cease to exist is, in effect, to say that while he does exist he does not exist necessarily, *i. e.* that he is not self-existent, for a self-existent being is one who exists by absolute necessity of nature, and that necessity must have operated from eternity that is passed—to adopt our usual phraseology—to eternity to come.

§ 6. And if reason teaches the self-existence and eternity of God, we may surely expect to find these doctrines affirmed in the volume of Divine revelation; though I think the following remark of an excellent writer should be borne in mind, when the Scriptures are appealed to with reference to a point like this. "The Scripture as it does not much insist upon proving the being of a God, but rather always supposing that, to be already known by the light of nature, so also, when it mentions any of the natural attributes of the Divine essence, it does not usually enlarge upon the proof or explication of them, but generally makes mention of them occasionally only, and as presupposing them well known by men's reason." There is, however, in the way of occasional affirmation, most abundant proof in the volume of Divine truth of all the natural attributes of the Divine Being, and, amongst the rest, of his self-existence and eternity. The names Jah and Jehovah, by which he has been pleased to distinguish himself, derived from the verb denoting existence, teach us that he exists in a gloriously peculiar manner, by necessity of nature,—that he always did, and always will exist. Hence the apostle John, finding no word in the Greek to represent the idea of the Hebrew, uses a periphrasis or comment on the word, and expresses the name of Jehovah by—He, "which is, and which was, and which is to come." Abraham planted a grove we are told in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the Lord—"the *everlasting* God," it is added, to distinguish him from the gods of the heathen, which are but of yesterday. He is frequently styled the eternal and everlasting God. "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." "Hast thou not heard," says the prophet, "that the everlasting God fainteth not,



neither is weary?" "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever." And the Psalmist, weary on contemplating a world of fluctuations, fixed his thoughts, and found repose in God, as an unchanging and eternal being. "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no God with me: I kill and I make alive,"—is his own language; and, "I lift up my hand to heaven, and say I live for ever." We read also of his eternal power, and his eternal council. He must, therefore, of course be himself eternal, since his council and power are so. In the beginning he created the heavens and the earth, and so must himself have been before the beginning—or, in other words, from everlasting. Under a conviction, then, of our own frailty, let us find consolation in the eternity of God. "But thou, Lord, of old hast laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them; and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end."

§ 7. SECONDLY.—The great God must be *immutable*, as well as self-existent and eternal, *i.e.* absolutely incapable of change in any point of view, either as to his essence, attributes, knowledge, or determinations. • For the true idea of immutability totally forbids all conception of change in any respect, or in the slightest degree. The most inconsiderable alteration in one of the Divine determinations or thoughts would as effectually destroy his immutability as a change in his essence, or the extinction of his existence. It is "a glory," properly observes

an able writer, "belonging to all the attributes of God. It is not a single perfection of the Divine nature, nor is it limited to particular objects thus and thus disposed. Mercy and justice have their distinct objects and distinct acts: mercy is conversant about a penitent, justice about an obstinate sinner. In our conception of the Divine perfections, his perfections are different. The wisdom of God is not his power, nor his power his holiness; but immutability is the centre wherein they all unite. There is not one perfection which may not be said to be—and truly is—immutable: none of them will appear so glorious without this beam—this sun of immutability, which renders them highly excellent, without the least shadow of imperfection. How cloudy would his blessedness be, if it were changeable! How dim his wisdom, if it might be obscured! How feeble his power, if it were capable of becoming sickly and languishing! How would mercy lose its lustre, if it could change into wrath,—and wrath much of its dread, if it could be turned into mercy,—while the object of justice remains unfit for mercy, and one that hath need of mercy continues only fit for the Divine fury! But unchangeableness is the thread that runs through the whole web: it is the enamel of all the rest; none of them without it could look with a triumphant aspect."\*

§ 8. There is a clear distinction between the immutability and the eternity of God; though both of these perfections rest ultimately upon the same basis, if I may so speak. It is possible to conceive of a being enduring for ever,—by which expression his eternity is expressed,—and yet not remaining the same for ever,—by which his immutability is denoted; but it is not possible to conceive of a self-existent being who is not both eternal and

\* Charnock on the Attributes, vol. i., p. 395, Rel. Tr. Soc. Edition.

immutable. For the true idea of a self-existent being, as we have seen, is a being who exists by absolute necessity of nature; so that it is a self-contradiction to suppose him not to exist. Now the same necessity which forms the ground or reason of his existence forms the ground or reason of the attributes of which he is possessed. It is just as necessary for the great First Cause to be wise and powerful, and just and good, and so on, as it is for him simply to be; and therefore it is just as necessary for him to continue to be so, as to continue to be. The necessary existence of his essence and his attributes secures not only the eternity, but the immutability of both. I do not place the immutability of God on the ground upon which some writers have rested it, viz. that as he is above all other beings, and therefore cannot be changed by them, so it is impossible to conceive of his effecting a change upon himself. I do not, I say, place the immutability of God upon this basis, because, though I know it is infinitely absurd to conceive of the existence in the Divine mind of a volition to change or alter himself in the slightest degree, because the existence of such a volition is infinitely impossible; yet, as it may serve to illustrate what I have said concerning the necessary existence of the Divine essence and attributes, I will venture to say further, that if such a volition could be conceived, it must, I imagine, be a fruitless volition. The infinitely blessed God is not what he is by volition, though it is impossible to conceive that he does not regard both his being and attributes with infinite complacency; and therefore mere volition—could it be conceived, which however it cannot—would effect no change. That which exists by absolute necessity of nature must, in virtue of the same necessity, be both eternal and immutable. “He who hath not his being

from another," says the estimable Charnock, who writes admirably and usefully on the subject of the Divine perfections, but not always—as I think at least—with the same philosophical accuracy as in the statement which follows,—“He who hath not his being from another cannot but be always what he is. God is the first being—an independent being: he was not produced of himself, or of any other, but by nature always has been; and therefore cannot by himself, or by any other, be changed from what he is in his own nature. That which is not may as well assume to itself a being, as he, who hath and is all being, have the least change from what he is.”\* And again, “Unchangeableness necessarily pertains to the nature of God. . . . . If any perfection of his nature could be separated from him, he would cease to be God. What did not possess the whole nature of God could not have the essence of God,—it is reciprocated with the nature of God. Whatever is immutable by nature is God; whatsoever is God is immutable by nature.”†

§ 9. These remarks will prepare us for conceiving aright of the difference which exists between the immutability of God, and that which he has stamped upon the creatures whom he has formed. Believers in Christ will live for ever. The period of their blessed existence will be commensurate with that of the blessed God himself. But their “standing,” as one has justly observed, “will not be from themselves, or from the nature of created strength, holiness, or wisdom, which in themselves are apt to fail, and finally to decay, but from the stability and confirmation they have by the gift and grace of God; so that it may rather be said of them that they will hereafter be unchanged than unchangeable, because

\* Charnock, p. 397.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 395, 396.

they are not so by nature, but by sovereign dispensation. Jehovah, on the contrary, is not unchanged, but unchangeable, and that by necessity of nature."

And after all, that future unchangeableness which the Scriptures warrant us to predicate of derived and dependent beings is rather eternity than immutability. The Psalmist, speaking of God, says that he shall *endure*, and remain *the same* throughout eternity. We can only affirm the former of his people. They shall endure; but they will not remain the same. There are some, indeed, who tell us that the future condition of the people of God will be an unchanging or unprogressive state of glory and happiness. But the assertion carries absurdity upon the very face of it. To affirm that a creature possessed of powers capable of making indefinite progress—a progress, in short, all but infinite in knowledge, and consequently in happiness—will remain stationary throughout eternity, is to utter a self-contradiction. It is to affirm, in effect, that in the very nature of things he must be miserable; while it is asserted, on the other hand, that he is completely blessed: for what can secure the happiness of any being on whose powers, shooting forwards as they must, do perpetually towards perfection, the hand of despotic regency is laid to confine them to their present meagre and dwarfish measure of progress? But to make progress is to be changed? We shall therefore be eternal, but not immutable hereafter. It is said that our bodies hereafter will not be changed. And that they will throughout eternity retain, through the power of God, their resemblance to the glorified body of Christ is undoubted. In this respect they will ever remain the same. But to affirm that no change of any kind will or can take place upon them is to assert that to which those who fully believe in the necessary mutability of all

created existences will find it very difficult to assent. And if we turn to the law and the testimony, we shall find the most satisfactory proof that immutability is an attribute of the ever blessed God. He is the Lord, we are assured; he changes not, and therefore the "sons of Jacob are not consumed." He is "the father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." He is "not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" The heavens and the earth shall perish, but he shall endure, *i. e.* shall be eternal; and though they shall be changed, he shall remain the same, *i. e.* shall be immutable.

\* § 10. The most plausible objections to the immutability of God—and they can scarcely be called plausible ones after all—are derived from those Scriptures in which Jehovah is said to have repented, and to have passed from the execution of his threatenings. "It repented the Lord that he had made man upon the earth, and it grieved him at his heart."\* Now upon this passage I observe that repentance, in the strict and literal sense of the term, is no more ascribed to God than grief is; so that if Jehovah cannot be supposed from these words to be the subject of grief, we need not infer from them that he is the subject of repentance. Now, since Jehovah is affirmed to be God blessed for ever, no proper grief, as it has been well observed, can be in him. That were inconsistent with perfect blessedness, as repentance would be with infallible foreknowledge. It is impossible, therefore, to suppose that the self-existent eternal God either really repents or really grieves; but he is said to do both, in accommodation to the weakness of our capacities.

\* Gen. vi. 6.

He is said to have hands, and eyes, and ears; but as we do not infer from this that he has a body like us, so, because he is said to have anger and repentance, we must not conclude him to have passions like us. "When we cannot fully comprehend him as he is," says one, "he clothes himself with our nature in his expressions, that we may apprehend him as we are able; yet those human ways of speaking ought to be understood in a manner agreeable to the infinite excellence and majesty of God, and are only designed to mark out something in God which has a resemblance to something in us. As we cannot speak to God as gods, but as men, so we cannot understand him speaking to us as a God, unless he condescends to speak to us like a man. God therefore frames his language to our dulness—not to his own state, and informs us by our own phrases what he would have us learn of his nature, as nurses talk in broken language to young children. In all such expressions, therefore, we must ascribe the perfection we conceive in them to God, and lay the imperfection at the door of the creature."

Repentance in God means, therefore, nothing more than a change of conduct in God. It does not imply that he is ever led to regret the line of conduct he had once pursued, in consequence of the possession of new—or in any measure of altered views and feelings, as is frequently the case with us; but that he changes his conduct as if his views and feelings had undergone a change. In short, when the change in the Divine conduct is such as that, if it had been exhibited by us, it might or would have resulted from repentance—truly and properly so called,—then Jehovah, in accordance with the usual mode in which the sacred writers speak of God, may be said to repent.

In like manner, the non-fulfilment of some of his pre-

dictions has been sometimes urged against the immutability of God. The true answer to this objection has been very well stated by an able writer. "When," says he, "we find predictions in Scripture not executed, we must consider them not as absolute but conditional, or, as the civil law calls it, an interlocutory sentence. God declared what would follow by natural causes, or by the demerit of man,—not what he would absolutely do himself. And though in many of those predictions the condition is not expressed, it is understood." This was manifestly the case with respect to Nineveh. Within forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed, *i. e.* unless she repent. The promises of God are to be understood with the condition of perseverance in well doing, and his threatenings with a clause of revocation annexed to them provided that men repent. And this God lays down as a general case—always to be remembered as a rule—for interpreting his threatenings against a nation; and the same rule will hold in threatenings against a particular person. "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and pull down, and destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them."\* Upon this solution of the difficulty which arises from the non-execution of the Divine threatenings, the learned German commentator upon Hartley's *Observations on Man* has constructed one of the most plausible arguments I have seen in support of the Socinian doctrine of final restitution, or, in other words, the ultimate salvation both of men and devils. "God threatened to destroy Nineveh," he argues,—I quote the argument, however, from memory, not having seen the book for the

\* Jer. xviii. 7, 8.



last twenty years,—“but, the execution of that sentence was suspended on their future conduct. It was unconditional in form, but conditional in reality. And the same,” he proceeds to argue, “is the case with the threatenings of future punishment which the Scriptures denounce against the ungodly. They are suspended upon their conduct. If they should ever cease to be sinners, their sufferings will cease; though the sentence passed upon them is,” he admits, “a denunciation of eternal sufferings.” Having thus endeavoured to clear his ground, he proceeds to show—or rather he takes it for granted—that the constant endurance of the consequences of sin must, in the course of a longer or shorter period, produce hatred to sin; and then his conclusion is, when the work of moral purification is completed, the sufferings of the transgressor must cease. Now I see only one fallacy in this argument; it is in the concluding part of it. For if a change could take place in the character of the finally impenitent hereafter, I can entertain no doubt that a corresponding change would and must take place in their state. The mistake of this writer lies in supposing that the future sufferings of the ungodly are of a purifying nature,—that the mere endurance of misery, though it should be known to be the consequence of sin, must extinguish the love of sin. Such an assumption is contrary to every part of Divine revelation, and opposed by every day’s experience. The evils which follow in the train of sin may in some degree alter the conduct, but they never did and they never can change the heart. They may deter from the commission of the criminal act, but they cannot extinguish the criminal desire. Nothing but the influence of the Holy Spirit can effect that; and as the exclusive scene of their outpouring is the present world, he that shall be found filthy at

the day of judgment must remain filthy still, and for ever.

§ 11. I cannot conclude this lecture without enumerating some of the more important practical lessons which are taught us by the self-existence, the eternity and immutability of God; though I shall barely enumerate them, leaving your own minds to expatiate more fully upon them, and intending them as mere hints which you may expand and amplify in the course of your future ministry. We learn, *First*, how great and glorious a being God is,—a self-existent, eternal, immutable being! *Secondly*.—How complete is the property of God in the universe he has made, and how indisputable his right to govern it. Whatever we can make or fashion is our property, in the highest sense in which anything can be ours. God, it is to be remembered, not only made, but *created*,—not only made the work, but the materials. Hence his property is plainly superior and paramount to all others. And having created all things, he has a right to govern the things he has made. *Thirdly*.—How necessary it is that Jehovah should make the promotion of his own glory the ultimate end of all his actions. Perfect goodness, as well as rectitude, requires that he should invariably aim at the accomplishment of the most important object in every part of his conduct; and considering how glorious a being he is, how immeasurably and infinitely superior to any and all the creatures of his power, what end can be so worthy of him as the manifestation of his own glory? *Fourthly*.—How strong a ground of confidence does this view of the character of God afford to the Christian that he shall be brought to the ultimate enjoyment of the heavenly world. It forbids the fear that our imperfections and sins, distressing as they are to us, will cause him to withdraw

his love from us. We too frequently turn aside from God,—*we* change! If he, then, were not immutable, what would become of us? But he is the Lord, and he changes not; and therefore we are not consumed. It secures the accomplishment of all the promises: for he “is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?”\* And since he has promised to keep his people by his mighty power, he will hold them safe in his hands, until the destined moment arrives for *administering unto them, abundantly, an entrance* “into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”† And, *Fifthly*, how awful will be the condition of those to whom this great Being is an enemy! The whole of these statements strikingly illustrate the language of the apostle,—“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!”‡

\* Num. xxiii. 19.

† 2 Peter i. ii.

‡ Heb. x. 31.

## LECTURE IV.

### NATURAL PERFECTIONS OF GOD—OMNIPRESENCE AND OMNISCIENCE.

Omnipresence, definition of:—the evidence of, as derived from reason and revelation:—omniscience:—objects of Divine knowledge:—things *existing*, and things that *might* exist:—the statements of Scripture:—Dr. Adam Clarke's view; and remarks on:—improvements.

§ 1. THIRDLY.—The great First Cause of all things must be *omnipresent, or infinite*. In other words, his presence must pervade all space, as well as all time. To borrow the language of Charnock, “As eternity is the perfection whereby he hath neither beginning nor end; immutability is the perfection whereby he hath neither increase nor diminution; so immensity or omnipresence—or infinity, as it is sometimes called—is that whereby he hath neither bounds nor limitation. As he is in all time, yet so as to be above all time,—so is he in all places, yet so as to be above limitation by or to any place. It was a good expression of a heathen to illustrate this, that God is a sphere or circle, whose centre is everywhere, and circumference nowhere.”\* In prosecuting our inquiries on this subject, it will be proper,

\* Vol. I., p. 459, Rel. Tr. Soc. Edition.

first, to endeavour to fix, as far as it can be done, the sense in which omnipresence is ascribed to God; and, secondly, to lay before you the evidence we possess that this attribute is, in point of fact, really possessed by the Divine Being.

§ 2. *First*, then, we are to endeavour to ascertain what is meant by omnipresence as an attribute of God. I have said we should aim to fix the sense of the term, *as far as it can be done*, when used in this connection. And I have expressed myself in this manner, because I believe the human mind is utterly unable to conceive aright of the Divine omnipresence. When we attempt to obtain a well-defined view of this attribute,—to form a notion of what we mean by omnipresence—a notion which it is possible to express in significant and intelligible words,—we find it extremely difficult, if not impossible—at least I acknowledge I do—to get beyond the notion of omniscience and omnipotence. God's universal presence is apt to resolve itself, in our conceptions, into his universal knowledge and universal agency. Of the two last perfections, viz. omnipresence and omnipotence, we can form a tolerably distinct notion; but when we attempt to conceive of God's presence being everywhere, as distinct from and previous to his knowing all things, and being able to do all things, we make but little progress—our perceptions become very obscure—we enter, in fact, upon a field which the human intellect, with its present light, is unable to explore. Yet is there a clear distinction between God's being everywhere, and knowing and being able to do all things,—that is, unless we adopt that philosophy which denies the doctrine of essences altogether, and affirms both concerning material and spiritual existences that they are nothing more than the sum total of their qualities—that with respect

to matter there is no substratum—nothing which stands under or supports the qualities which it possesses, or in which these qualities inhere—that matter, in short, not possesses, but in extension and form, and solidity and divisibility, and so on; and in like manner of spirit—of the infinite Spirit—that God, in short, is infinite wisdom, power, justice, holiness, truth, and so on. With this philosophy I cannot, however, at present acquiesce; though it has the support of incomparably the most acute, as I think, of our modern metaphysicians, viz. Dr. Brown, late Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh. I am well aware of the plausible arguments in support of this theory. I am not ignorant that it may be said, that if you take away the qualities, you take away the supposed substance in which they are said to inhere,—that if you take solidity from extension from matter, you remove matter itself. I am not ignorant of all this. But this only goes, as far as I can see at present, to prove that there is a necessary and inseparable connection between the qualities and the substance—that one cannot be annihilated without the other; it fails to prove the identity of the two—that the qualities are the substance, or rather that there is no substance—that matter is nothing but a bundle of properties. It is to my mind all but intuitively certain that qualities must have some substance in which they inhere,—that matter is not extension, form, &c., nor the infinite Spirit mere knowledge, and power, and so on. And if this be the case—if qualities are not essences—there is a clear distinction between God's being everywhere, and knowing and possessing the power to do all things. I agree therefore with Dr. Ridgley in the following statement: "This perfection of the Godhead," viz. omnipresence, "does not consist merely, as some

suppose, in his knowing what is done in heaven and earth, which is only a metaphorical sense of omnipresence; as when Elisha tells Gehazi, 'Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee?' Or as the apostle says to the church at Corinth, that though he was absent in body, yet he was present with them in spirit; or, as we say, that our souls are with our friends in distant places, as often as we think of them. Nor does it consist in God's being present by his authority, or, I may add, by his power, as a king is said, by a figurative way of speaking, to be present in all parts of his dominions, when persons are deputed to act under him, or by his authority." With Dr. Ridgley I agree, as I have said, that this does not exhaust the meaning of the language we use, when we talk of an omnipresent Deity. But if you require me to state clearly and distinctly what more is included in it, I should say at once I feel myself totally unable to do it. The best and most intelligible statement I have met with upon the subject is the following one of the celebrated Dr. Samuel Clarke. "'Tis evident, therefore, that the self-existent being must be infinite or omnipresent, in the strictest and most complete sense. But as to the particular *manner* of his being infinite, or everywhere present, in opposition to the manner of created things being present in such or such finite places, this is as impossible for our finite understandings to comprehend or explain, as it is for us to form an adequate idea of infinity. Yet that the thing is true, that he is actually omnipresent, we are absolutely certain." And after objecting to the explanations of the schoolmen, which he justly pronounces unintelligible, he adds, "That which we can more safely affirm, and which no atheist can say is absurd, and which nevertheless is

sufficient to all wise and good purposes, is this;—That whereas all finite and created beings can be present but in one definite place, at once, and corporeal beings even in that one place very imperfectly and unequally, to any purpose of power or activity, only by the successive motion of different members and organs;—the Supreme Cause, on the contrary, being an infinite and most simple essence, and comprehending all things perfectly in himself, is *at all times equally* present, both in his simple essence, and by the immediate and perfect exercise of all his attributes, to *every point* of the boundless immensity, as if it were really all but one single point.”\* When it is said in the above quotation that Jehovah is at all times present to every point, &c., not merely by the immediate and perfect exercise of all his attributes, but also in his simple essence, the meaning is, I apprehend, or should be, that God himself is everywhere present, for the Divine essence is God himself. We mean to state that God is actually present everywhere, and not present merely by knowing all things. So far, perhaps, we can go on this subject with tolerable clearness and certainty. But if we attempt to proceed further, we get beyond our depth; and are in danger of falling into modes of expression which want—to my feelings at least—that character of sacredness which should be preserved in all our speculations concerning that infinite Being who, at the same time that he inhabits eternity, dwells in the humble and contrite heart. We are told that the “essential presence” of God “is not by multiplication. For that which is infinite cannot multiply itself, or make itself more or greater than it was. Neither is this essential presence by extension or diffusion, as a piece of gold may be beaten out to cover a

\* See pp. 47, 48, Fifth Edition.



large compass of ground. No: if God should create millions of worlds, he would be in them all, not by the stretching out or growth of his being, but by the infinity of his being; and the same essence he had from eternity."

Again: we are told that, "there is no space wherein God is not wholly according to his essence, and wherein his whole substance does not exist. Not a part of heaven, it is said, can be designed, [or pointed out,] wherein the Creator is not wholly. As he is in one part of heaven, he is in every part of heaven."\* Now upon these statements it may be observed, that if they should operate to remove any misconceptions from the mind, they convey a very slight portion, if any, of real information; while the latter quotation especially seems to venture upon forbidden ground. What do we know about the whole essence of God, as it is said, being present in every part of space, at every moment of time? What ideas can we form upon this awfully mysterious and profound subject? Is it not perfectly manifest that, when such expressions escape our lips, we use language—as indeed is too frequently the case—without attaching any definite conceptions to it? By the omnipresence of Deity we mean, then, that in some manner unintelligible to us he is present in every part of space, and in every moment of time.

§ 3. *Secondly.*—We proceed to consider the evidence on which we ground our faith in the omnipresence of God. The existence of this attribute has been thought by many capable of strict demonstration. "It is as reasonable to think," says Charnock, "the essence of God to be *everywhere*, as to be *always*; immensity or omnipresence is as rational as eternity; that indivisible

\* Charnock, vol. i., p. 470, Rel. Tr. Soc. Edition.

essence which reaches through all times may as well reach through all ages." And I have no hesitation to add that it is reasonable to think this. Admit the self-existence of Jehovah, *i.e.* his necessary existence; and then, while it certainly follows that he must be eternal and immutable,—as I endeavoured to show you in our last lecture,—there is no man of candour who will deny that there is most powerful probability in support of his omnipresence. Still probability is not demonstration. The following demonstration, then, as it has been called, is given us in substance by the celebrated Dr. Samuel Clarke. That which exists by absolute necessity of nature,—by a necessity, that is, which is prior to all our conceptions of its existence—prior in the order of nature, though not of time, to its existence, and so forms the ground or reason of its existence,—that which thus exists by absolute necessity of nature must be everywhere, as well as always; for necessity, absolutely such in itself, has no relation to time, or place, or anything else. Absolute necessity, which is supposed to be the ground of his existence, must operate as certainly and infallibly in all places as at all times. Why is it that we cannot conceive a moment of time in which the great First Cause is not? Because he exists necessarily. And for the same reason, there can be no point of space where the great First Cause exists not. When the ground of the existence of any being is absolute necessity, that being cannot be limited to time or space. What is there to limit it to space any more than to time? If the necessity of existence of which it is admitted to be the subject does not ensure its existence in all places, it cannot exist by necessity of existence in any place; because there is no conceivable reason why this supposed ground or reason of existence should exert its influence

in one place more than in another. That which is confined to a definite portion of space must be limited by something *ad extra*, by something external to itself; and what is this but saying that it does not exist by necessity of nature? For such a ground of existence is illimitable, uncontrollable; it cannot be bounded by space or time, but must pour the tide of being of whose existence it is the causal reason through and beyond the confines of both. There is, I feel, great force in this reasoning; but whether it deserves the name of demonstration, I confess I have some doubt. It does not appear to me, I acknowledge, after the most attentive thought, so certain that a self-existent being must necessarily be an omnipresent, as that he must be an eternal and an immutable being. Grant that a being exists by absolute necessity of nature; and it is intuitively certain that he must always exist. There is not an axiom in mathematical science to which the mind more fully assents. It is further intuitively certain that it must exist somewhere. This is quite as manifest as that it must exist always. To this assertion the name of demonstration may be applied. But I think the conclusion that it must exist everywhere is not so self-evident. My mind does not surrender itself to its correctness and truth with such entire confidence as to that of the former assertion. It stands, I think, in a different predicament of proof. I can scarcely admit that the term demonstration should be applied to it. Yet after all, the reasoning of Dr. Clarke, to which I just now called your attention, is very powerful, and I imagine perfectly conclusive. If it is not self-evident, it is all but self-evident that absolute necessity must operate everywhere, as well as anywhere; and the following statement of that acute reasoner certainly deserves to be

considered. "Determination of a particular quantity, or particular time or place of existence of anything, cannot arise but from somewhat external to the thing itself. For example, why there should exist just such a small determinate quantity of matter, neither more nor less, interspersed in the immense vacuity of space, no reason can be given; nor can there be anything in nature which could have determined a thing so indifferent in itself, as is the measure of that *quantity*, but only the will of an intelligent and free agent. To suppose matter, or any other substance necessarily existing in a finite determinate quantity, in an inch cube for instance, or in any certain number of cubic inches, and no more, is exactly the same absurdity as supposing it to exist necessarily, and yet for a finite duration only, which every one sees to be a plain contradiction."

§ 4. From the light of reason, we turn to that of Divine revelation. And here, if we are not told in what manner God is omnipresent, and if no proof save that of direct assertion is attempted that he is so, we meet with repeated assurances that the great First Cause fills all space, as well as all time. "Whither," said the Psalmist, "shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee."

With these views of the Psalmist, the declarations of the prophet Jeremiah exactly correspond. "Am I a

God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord." "The heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee." "He is not far," said the apostle Paul in the court of the Areopagus at Athens,—“He is not far from every one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being.” On the latter clause of this passage, an excellent writer thus remarks,—“It denotes the essential presence of God with his creatures. If he had meant it of his efficacy in preserving us, it would not have been any proof of his nearness to us. Who would go about to prove the body or substance of the sun to be near us, because it warms and enlightens us, when our sense evidences the distance of it? We live in the beams of the sun; but we cannot be said to live in the sun, which is so far distant from us.” Proof also that the Deity is possessed of the attribute of omnipresence is supplied us by the promise of the Saviour concerning his people: “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them;” for what is affirmed of one of the Persons of the adorable Trinity—with reference to this point at least—is virtually affirmed of all.

§ 5. FOURTHLY.—The great First Cause must be *omniscient*, as well as eternal, immutable, and omnipresent. I shall not trouble you with any account of the technical terms by which some scholastic divines have distinguished the various kinds of knowledge they ascribe to God. The word omniscient exhibits God as possessed of all knowledge; and when we say of the Divine Being that he knows everything which is to be known, the expression is perhaps adapted to convey as correct a conception upon the subject as the human mind can form. I cannot altogether separate the proof that the

Divine Being possesses this attribute from an illustration of the attribute itself, but must blend them more together than was the case in the consideration of his eternity and omnipresence.

§ 6. *First.*—Then among the objects of Divine knowledge must be included all things that actually exist, in heaven, earth, and hell, in all parts of the universe,—in short, even though that universe should all but infinitely surpass in extent the most enlarged conceptions of the human mind. For since God is the Creator of all things, and is actually present, as we have seen, in all parts of his wide dominions, and at every moment of time, who can doubt that he must have the most perfect acquaintance with all things? That he is an intelligent being is beyond all question, since he has imparted intelligence to others; and no perfection can exist in the effect which does not exist in the cause, or that perfection would be uncaused, which is absurd. And being an infinite mind or intelligence, wherever he is, his knowledge is, which is inseparable from his being, and must accordingly be infinite likewise. And wherever his infinite knowledge is, it must necessarily have a full and perfect prospect of all things, and nothing can be concealed from its inspection. He includes and surrounds everything with his boundless presence, and penetrates every part of their substance with his all-seeing eye; so that the inmost nature and essence of all things are perfectly naked and open to his view. “He is all eye, all ear, all consciousness,” says an eloquent writer,—“of course he cannot but attend to everything, and know everything. This is essentially and unchangeably his character. He can no more fail of regarding an insect than an angel, an atom than a world. As we when our ears are open cannot but hear

—when our eyes are open cannot but see—when our minds are directed to any object cannot but perceive,—so God, who is all mind, all perception, cannot but perceive all things.” When we thus connect the idea of God’s actual and constant presence with all the objects of his creative energy, to whom they owe all the powers and faculties and qualities they possess, and on whose conservative goodness they every moment depend, few things can be more manifest than that the knowledge of God extends to all things that actually exist—to the physical properties of every part of the material universe—to the wants of the irrational part of the creation—to the condition and characters of men—to their words, their actions, their affections, their thoughts—to everything past, present, and to come,—all—all are perpetually within the full view of an infinite and ever present Deity. But—

§ 7. *Secondly.*—The knowledge of God extends to all things that might be, as well as to those which actually are. The knowledge of God is not more bounded by the things which exist than is his power, because it is not derived from their existence, but rather preceded it. As by virtue of his eternity he thoroughly pervades all time, and goes beyond all time; so by virtue of his omniscience he perceives not only all things that are, but all that may be. The universe which has been actually brought into being is not, surely, the only one to which omnipotent power could have imparted existence. From an infinite variety of possibles, the wisdom of God has selected one, which has become by his power an actual universe. Now what the power of God could have done, the wisdom of God must have known. And, in fact, the omniscience of God was the source of that ~~vision~~ <sup>vision</sup> in the mind of Deity which led him to issue

that wondrous command by which in an instant the present universe was brought into being. He saw that it was the best of all possible universes—most eminently adapted to promote the end which creation was intended to subserve; and therefore “he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it hath stood fast,” &c. The knowledge of God, then, extends to all things that might be, as well as to those that actually are.

§ 8. That God is *omniscient*, as well as omnipresent, is a truth taught beyond all question in the inspired volume. “O Lord,” says the Psalmist, “thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my down sitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.”\* And of a knowledge which extends, as it has been well said, at the same instant of time to every individual, in every order of existence—rational and irrational, and to every object—animate and inanimate,—which extends to all the circumstances, all the interests, all the actions, all the words, all the thoughts of every accountable creature, as perfectly and distinctly as if that creature, instead of being one individual of a race of which there are millions like himself, were the only individual of his species, the only creature in existence,—of a knowledge, I say, so pervading, so comprehensive, so minute, so accurate, the Psalmist might well say, It is “too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.” To the same effect, and still more explicit, is the language of Peter: “Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.”† Against that view of the Divine omniscience which has

\* Psalm cxxxix. 1-4.

† John xxi. 17.



just been given an objection has been brought, to which I deem it desirable to call your attention before I conclude this lecture. It is the statement of Dr. Adam Clarke,—a statement evidently got up for the purpose of neutralizing the Calvinistic retort upon the advocates of Pelagianism—that foreknowledge as clearly implies the certain futuration of the event foreseen as pre-appointment or predestination. Admitting the foreknowledge of God, no Arminian can reply to this. Dr. Clarke has penetration enough to see this, and accordingly he denies it. Omniscience with him is not omniscience,—it is not wisdom, but the power to obtain it. The omniscience of God, he tells us, implies no more than his power to know all things, as his omnipotence means his power to do all things. Because it does not follow, that because God can do all things, that therefore he must do all; so neither does it follow, he argues, that because he *can* know all things, that therefore he *must* know all things. And having made this statement, he proceeds to declare that God must be ignorant of some things, since, if he were not, all free agency would be destroyed, and there could not be in fact either vice or virtue in the universe. The praise of ingenuity I have no wish to withhold from this statement; but that is the utmost that can be conceded. It is impossible for me to give anything like a full reply to it; but I will touch upon one or two points where the argument halts, and leave you—if you wish for more assistance in encountering this Arminian giant—to find it in an excellent little work published a few years ago by Gill Timney.

It is then manifest, I observe, that the radical fallacy, the *πρωτον ψευδος* of this statement, is a mistake with reference to the characteristic essence, if we may so speak, of these two perfections. The essence of omnipotence is

power; the essence of omniscience is knowledge. Omnipotence is all power; omniscience is all knowledge. The former is not the actual doing of all things, because its essence is not in activity, but ability: it is therefore truly stated to be the power of doing all things; though I am very much disposed to think we might add, it is the power of knowing as well as of doing all things. The latter, or omniscience, on the contrary, is the actual knowledge of all things, because its essence is not in ability, but activity. To say that omniscience is the power to know all things is to confound it with omnipotence; and to affirm that there are some things which the Deity does not know is to deny his omniscience. A being may be infinitely powerful who leaves many things undone which he can do, because omnipotence consists not in action, but in power; but no being can be infinitely wise who is ignorant of anything, because omniscience consists not in power, but in action. To define the omniscience of God a power to know all things, and to affirm that there are some things which he does not know, as well as does not do, is to ascribe imperfection to God. Many reasons may operate to prevent the exertion of the power to *do*, all of them consistent with the acknowledged perfection of the Divine character. But nothing can prevent the exertion of the supposed power to *know*, but inability, or indolence, or indisposition; and to ascribe either of these to God is to say that he is imperfect, like ourselves. Besides, if omniscience means only a power to know, *i.e.* if wisdom is power, in short, is it not manifest that all the moral attributes of God may be defined in a similar way? Wisdom, the close attendant of Divine knowledge, may be said to consist merely in a power to be wise,—holiness in a power to love good and hate evil, and not in actual opposition to

all evil, and attachment to whatever is holy, just, and good. In the case of these attributes, their actual exercise is essential to their very existence: and so it is of wisdom or knowledge; for he that could be wise, and was not actually so, would be the greater fool.

§ 9. The practical improvement of the subject to which your attention has been directed will, I trust, be so familiar to your minds as to render it unnecessary for me to say much. You will see—1. How necessary are the attributes of omnipresence and omniscience to qualify the Judge for the proceedings of the great day. If Jehovah were not omnipresent and omniscient, how could we look for an equitable decision? 2. How calculated is the recollection of these attributes to deter from the commission of sin. “Nor,” says the poet, “let my weaker passions dare consent to sin, for God is there.” 3. How powerfully calculated to support in every time of distress. 4. How awful the thought to the ungodly!

## LECTURE V.

### NATURAL PERFECTIONS OF GOD—OMNIPOTENCE.

Preliminary remark:—terms explained and illustrated:—the sense in which potency is ascribed to God:—proof that he is almighty:—creation:—the support of creation:—an objection to the proof of omnipotence answered:—spiritual creation:—conclusion.

§ 1. FIFTHLY.—The great First Cause must be *omnipotent*.

If the wisdom of God should be treated of as a separate attribute, which I conceive to be the case, it might be thought that we should proceed to consider it immediately after omniscience, with which it evidently has so near an affinity. I agree, however, with Dr. Dwight in considering wisdom as a kind of compound attribute. It manifestly consists of knowledge to perceive, and benevolence to lead him to employ the best means for the attainment of the most noble and important ends. It should, therefore, rather be placed in the list of the moral than of the natural attributes of God. Deferring then, for the present, the consideration of the Divine wisdom, the next in order of the natural attributes of God is the one the discussion of which is to form the subject for the commencement of this lecture.

The great First Cause must be an omnipotent being. I shall here again follow the order which I have observed in former cases, by explaining and illustrating, in the first place, the meaning of the proposition which has been now enunciated; and, secondly, by showing that omnipotence is beyond all question an attribute of Deity.

§ 2. *First*, then, I am to explain and illustrate the terms employed. The word omnipotence means, as you well know, all power or potency; so that when we say that Jehovah is omnipotent, we mean that he is able to do *all* things. Now, perhaps, if any of you have paid attention to those nice and subtile disquisitions into which some of our metaphysicians have entered with reference to the nature of power, you will think this is no explanation of the matter after all. I could not, however, go into such discussions as these in the present course of lectures; in another department of my course, I shall most willingly do it; for the present, it must suffice to observe that the term power is used in its common acceptance in the sense in which it is constantly used, with the full conviction of knowing the meaning of what we say, when we ascribe all potency or power to God. The term power is not now used in the sense of authority—in the sense in which it was certainly employed by our Lord, when he said, “All power is given to me in heaven and in earth;” though Jehovah, beyond all question, is possessed of absolute and uncontrollable dominion. Such dominion, however, is the result of his omnipotence,—it is the sovereign rule which he is enabled to exercise over all beings and all worlds, by virtue of his possession of almighty power, in the sense in which we now ascribe power to him. The term power, as we now use it, is far more nearly allied in signification to the word *cause* than

*dominion*; though it is not perfectly synonymous with it. This latter word, viz. *cause*, is entirely a relative term; it means that which produces an effect, as an effect is that which flows from the operation of a cause. A piece of gold is cast into the crucible,—it is dissolved: that is the effect. Of this effect the fire is the cause; and we say it has the power to produce this effect. To exert power then, and to be a cause, are one and the same thing; though the words power and cause are not synonymous. There can be no cause without an effect, as a man cannot be a father without children, because the terms are so essentially relative ones; it is, however, quite possible to conceive of power which is never exerted—which remains in a state of quiescence through all eternity. Power, therefore, is that which qualifies any being to become a cause; and a cause is active power, or power roused into energy and operation.

§ 3. These remarks will prepare you for the following account of that Divine perfection of which we are now speaking. Omniscience is that attribute by which the great First Cause is enabled to effect whatsoever seems good in his sight. This definition, while it is sufficiently comprehensive, admits also of the necessary limitation under which we must understand the proposition which ascribes all power to God. There are some things which Jehovah himself—with reverence be it spoken—cannot do; but these things he is equally unable to will to do,—it will never seem good in his sight to make an effort to effect them: so that our definition of omnipotence is not too comprehensive, when we say—it is that attribute by which the Deity is enabled to effect whatsoever he pleases.

There are some things which Jehovah is physically unable, and there are others which he is morally unable

to do. The power of God for instance does not, *First*, extend to that which is impossible in itself. He cannot, for example, cause a thing to be and not to be at the same time; he cannot make that true which is necessarily false. That which implies a contradiction, and so cannot be done, is as much beyond the reach of almighty as of finite power. Nor, *Secondly*, does it extend to that which is inconsistent with the physical or natural perfection of the Deity. He cannot, for instance, destroy his being, or deprive himself of any portion of that perfection which gives so supreme a lustre to all his perfections. And this, as it has been well said, is no part of weakness, but the perfection of power. His power is that by which he remains for ever fixed in his own everlasting being. That cannot be reckoned as necessary to the omnipotence of God which all mankind count a part of weakness in themselves. God is omnipotent, because he is not impotent; and if he could die, he would be impotent, not omnipotent. Death is the feebleness of nature; it is undoubtedly the greatest impotence to cease to be. Who would call it a part of omnipotence to disable himself, and sink into nothing? The impossibility for God to die is not a fit article to impeach his omnipotence. It would be a strange way of arguing, to say a thing is not powerful, because it is not feeble, and cannot cease to be powerful; for death is a cessation of all power. God is almighty in doing what he will, not in suffering what he will not. To die is not an active, but a passive power—a defect of a power. God is too noble a nature to perish. Nor, *Thirdly*, does it extend to anything which is inconsistent with the moral nature or perfections of God. We are told in Scripture that it is impossible for God to lie, and that he cannot deny himself. This is no mark of

imperfection or of limitation; on the contrary, it results from the necessary and infinite perfection of the Divine nature. The two propositions are in fact identical. To say that God cannot lie is to say that he is perfect; to say that he is perfect is to say that he cannot lie. To affirm that because of the omnipotence of God there may be darkness in that understanding, which his admitted perfection supposes to be all light,—any moral obliquity of any kind in these powers, which it is granted are by necessity rectitude itself,—is to utter one of the grossest contradictions—an obvious, a self-evident absurdity.

None of these things come within the compass of Divine power; and none of them, be it observed at the same time, can become objects of Divine volition: so that though the declaration, Jehovah is able to do all things, must be understood with some limitations, yet still our definition of omnipotence—viz. that it is that attribute by which the great First Cause is enabled to effect whatsoever seems good in his sight—is manifestly correct and proper.

§ 4. We come, *Secondly*, to our proof that the great First Cause is really possessed of this attribute. And here it strikes me that the most useful mode of proceeding will be to show, first, in what manner we come to predicate power of the Divine Being at all; and then state the reasons which lead to the belief that that power is almighty. That power belongeth unto God is then, I observe, proved in the same way as that power belongs to man. What is power? It is, as we have seen, the capability of any being to operate in some way upon another, or to produce visible effects; and the results of power, or the effects which flow from its exertion, lead us to infer the existence of the principle



itself. In no other way could we have gained the notion of power at all; and in no other way can we arrive at certainty, with respect to any being, that power is an attribute of that being. Had we never seen fire melt gold, or become in any case the cause of fluidity, we could have had no conception that it possesses the power of thus changing the form and appearance of bodies subjected to its operation. In like manner, if we had seen no effects of any kind produced by the action of fire—no change whatever in the colour, weight or smell, or appearance of properties of any kind of the bodies which are brought into contact with it, we should have considered fire as entirely powerless. But in the existing state of matters, so to consider it, is altogether impossible. Its action in any way, upon any substance whatever, proves that it is not destitute of power; and our conceptions of the extent of power it possesses will be in exact proportion to the number and magnitude of the changes it operates upon the bodies with which it is brought into contact. Apply these remarks to the ever blessed Jehovah. That he is possessed of power we are sure, because we have seen it in the effects which have resulted from its exertion; that he possesses *great* power, we infer from the number, the variety, and the magnitude of these effects,—the only criterion, of this kind at least, we can have of the degree of power possessed by any being whatever; and, finally, that his power is *infinite*, we gather from the consideration that one energy competent to the production of such astonishing effects as the universe exhibits must be able to do all things which are not comprehended in the list of exceptions to which I have just referred you.

The universe, as we have seen in our preceding lectures, did not spring out of nothing,—it has not existed

from eternity,—it is not self-existent. It proceeded from the forming hand of God. It is an effect of which God is the cause; and not more surely does the melting of gold, when exposed to the action of fire, prove that that element has the power to fuse metals, than does the existence of the universe prove that the attribute of power belongs to the great Eternal. The only measure we have of the extent of that power is the vastness and astonishing nature of its operations. Contemplate then, for a moment, in the—

§ 5. *First place*,—the work of creation as one of the astonishing effects of Divine power, and calculated to prove, not only that the Divine Being possesses power, but great power; yea, infinite power. The very act of creation itself proclaims the power of the great First Cause. It is competent to human skill and ingenuity to alter the form and appearance of bodies—to mould them into ten thousand different shapes—to apply them to many different purposes—to convert barrenness into fertility, and to impart a covering of loveliness to that which is naturally destitute of all charms; but nought can he annihilate, nought can he create. To create is to bring something into existence, when nothing existed before. We are habituated to the expression, that it is to bring something out of nothing. It will admit of question, however, whether that mode of speaking does not in some measure veil from our minds the infinite difficulty, if I may so speak, which is involved in the act of creating. We are almost apt to conceive of nothing as constituting the materials on which the Divine power acted, and so to realize nothing more in this act than some vast and wonderful alteration. Creation, however, is not alteration,—beyond which the utmost skill and power of man cannot go;

for the most splendid productions of human ingenuity are only alterations of the form, or appearance, or properties of bodies actually existing, and that too by the agency of instruments ready prepared for us by the power of God. Creation, I say, is not alteration,—it is not formation, which supposes some substance to be formed, or to which some regular form is imparted; but it is the production of the substance, upon which—after existence is imparted to it—far inferior power may operate, and which is capable of being moulded into forms of inimitable beauty. But further, the vastness of creation bespeaks the power of God. The operations of man are carried on in a scale of insignificance, because his power is limited and insignificant. Great results are accordingly seldom to be expected from human agency; yet when we witness anything which deserves this epithet, we are strongly impressed with the extent and energy of the power which could bring it to pass. On this well-known principle, we infer the greatness of Jehovah's power from the vastness of creation. "The world," says a modern author, "which we inhabit, is itself a vast and amazing work. The great divisions of land and water—the continents and oceans—into which it is distributed—nay, the mountains and plains, the lakes and rivers, with which it is magnificently adorned—are, severally, sufficiently wonderful and affecting to fill our minds, and to engross all the powers of contemplation. Nor are our thoughts less deeply interested by the vast multitude of plants, trees, and animals with which every part of the globe is stored, at every period of time."\* Here is variety, as well as magnitude, to enhance our conceptions of the Divine power. And "when," adds the same author,

\* Dwight's *Theology*, Sermon VII.

“we lift up our eyes to the heavens, we are still more amazed at the sight of many such worlds, composing the planetary system;” although that “system—great and wonderful as it is—is a mere speck, compared with the real extent of the creation. Satisfactory evidence exists that every star which twinkles in the firmament is no other than a sun—a world of light, surrounded by its own attendant planets, formed into a system similar to ours. Forty-five thousand such stars have been counted by the aid of the Herschellian telescope, in so small a part of the heavens, that, supposing this part to be sown no thicker than the rest, the whole telescope would reach at least seventy-five millions in the whole sphere. By means of new improvements in the same optical instrument, they have been found to be numerous to a degree still more astonishing. Every one of” them may be “rationally concluded to be the sun and centre of a system of planetary and cometary worlds.” Human observation, however, though thus ample, has limits; while space has none.

“Fancy,” says the warm and eloquent Chalmers, “may take its flight far beyond the ken of eye or of telescope. It may expatiate in the outer regions of all that is visible,—and shall we have the boldness to say that there is nothing *there*? that the wonders of the Almighty are at an end, because we can no longer trace his footsteps? that his omnipotence is exhausted, because human art can no longer follow Him? that the creative energy of God has sunk into repose, because the imagination is enfeebled by the magnitude of its own efforts, and can keep no longer on the wing through those mighty tracts, which shoot far beyond what eye hath seen or the heart of man hath conceived—which sweep endlessly along, and merge into an awful and mysteri-

ous infinity?"\* Surely not! we may venture confidently to reply to this eloquent appeal. How can it be doubted that, if some mighty exertion of Divine power were to carry us far beyond the bounds of the visible creation,—immense and almost boundless as is the sweep which the eye of man, aided by instruments of exquisite skill, can reach,—how can it be doubted, I say, that on our arrival there, we might find ourselves only at the threshold of the universe of the infinite God?

And our conceptions of the power of God, resulting from the vastness of creation, will be considerably enhanced by the recollection that all this variety and amplitude of existence is the result of a simple volition on the part of God. Even the alterations upon bodies actually existing—to which only human power and skill are competent—are generally the result of much thought and labour. They cost us much more than creation cost the great Eternal: for God "spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." The act of volition had no sooner taken place than he saw all nature rising around. Light succeeded to darkness, and order to confusion; the waters rolled backwards into their beds; the dry land heaved; and the mountains lifted their heads towards heaven. The world, with all its furniture and inhabitants,—the heavens, with all their magnificence, arose out of nothing at the almighty fiat.

The lively representations of Scripture exhibiting God as the Creator of all things, and the power of God as displayed in the work of creation, will be present to all your minds. "He hath measured," says the prophet, "the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of

\* *Astronomical Discourses*, Sermon I., p. 32, last Edition.

the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance. Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity."

§ 6: Such is the proof which creation affords of the wonderful power of God. There is, however, a question which may be raised here, and upon which I deem it desirable to say a few words before we pass to the consideration of another subject. "Granting," perhaps an objector would say, "that you have demonstrated that power is an attribute of God, have you not failed to prove that his power is almighty? If he be the Maker of the universe, it must be admitted that he has power competent to the production of that effect; but may not that be the greatest work of which he is capable? If there be any other act which requires a superior degree of power, is it quite certain after all that that may not reach above the agency of him even who made the worlds? We measure the skill and power of agents in general by the results of their agency; and while it is perfectly plain that their ability must rise to, we are not generally entitled to conclude that it surpasses, the exhibitions which they have given of it. In short, does the work of creation prove that the Creator is possessed of omnipotence—of all potency, or power?"

Now here I am free to confess my dissatisfaction with the statement of the proof which the celebrated Dr. S. Clarke has given us of the infinite or omnipotent power of God. "Since nothing," says he, "is self-existent, and consequently all things in the universe were made by God, and are entirely dependent upon him,—and all

the powers of all things are derived from him, and must therefore be subject and subordinate to him,—'tis manifest that nothing can make any difficulty and resistance to the execution of his will; but he must of necessity have absolute power to do everything he pleases, with the perfectest ease, and in the perfectest manner, at once and in a moment, whenever he wills it. 'Tis sufficiently manifest from hence," he adds, "that the Supreme Cause must be infinitely powerful." I would reply that, to my mind, the reasoning of the Dr. does not render it manifest at all. I acknowledge that it proves, beyond all question, that Jehovah is *resistless* by any, and, indeed, by all the beings in the universe; but to say that he is resistless, and that he is omnipotent, are far from identical propositions. A tiger is resistless by a flock of sheep: but a tiger is not omnipotent; neither would he be so, though no created being were able to contend with him.

The legitimate reply to the objection to which I have just referred is, I imagine, that no greater work can be conceived than the work of creation, taken in connection with the manner in which it was effected; so that he who possesses power to create must be able to do all things which do not involve an impossibility, and so cannot be done by any power, either finite or infinite. "It is impossible to believe," says Dwight, "that the power which originally gives existence cannot do anything and everything which, in its own nature, is capable of being done."\* To the same effect Dr. Brown,—"It is the immediate succession of the object to the desire, which impresses the force of the Divine omnipotence on our minds."

§ 7. *Secondly*.—The power of God is displayed in the

\* *Theology*, Sermon VII.

support of the universe which he has brought into being. He preserves its physical existence. It has been a question—what would be the result of the total withdrawal of Divine energy? and, while all admit that instant confusion must be the consequence, many maintain that the universe would totally disappear, and leave no traces of its existence behind. I confess myself disposed to the latter opinion. I can form no idea of any being continuing to exist, without the conservative hand of God, which is not self-existent. Derived and dependent existence necessarily involve one another. There would need no volition on the part of God to annihilate the universe, were it his pleasure that it should be put out of being. It possesses a necessary tendency to nihility,—to counteract which a positive volition on the part of Deity is necessary. Providence may then be considered as a kind of continued creation.\* And what must he be who upholds all the beings whom he has formed, as he created them, by a mere act of volition,—what can he be less than omnipotent? He sustains the lives of all the animated parts of his creation; “for in him we live, and move, and have our being:” and, finally, it is he who preserves the order and regularity which exists in the movements of every part of the great universe which he has formed. Some infidel philosophers have endeavoured to shut God out of the scene, by ascribing all the operations which are perpetually going on in the physical world to the agency of second causes—to the operation of the

\* “Whatever does not necessarily exist in the first moment of its existence cannot necessarily exist in the second, or in any following moment, but must owe its continued existence to the will of the being by whom it was at first produced; for by supposing its existence to continue when that will have ceased, we should suppose it to be without the cause of its being.”—*Doddridge's Works*, vol. iv., p. 377.



laws of nature. But what are the laws of nature? They are, in fact, only modes of operation,—not efficient agents, nor agents in any rational sense of the term whatever: they are the regular and settled manner and order in which Divine energy is put forth. Providence is God upholding and operating in every part of the immense universe; and at every moment of time. “It is not for us to bring up our minds to this mysterious agency. Yet that such agency is exerted is undoubted. Yes; the God who created the universe holds it every moment in the hollow of his hand, pencils every flower, and gives nourishment to every blade of grass, and actuates the movements of every living thing. While magnitude does not overpower him, minuteness cannot escape, nor variety bewilder him; and though the human mind sinks under the grandeur of the idea, yet true it is—to adopt the language of an eloquent writer—that, at the very time while the mind of the Deity is abroad over the whole vastness of creation, there is not one particle of matter—there is not one individual principle of rational or of animal existence—there is not one single world in that expanse which teems with them—that his eye does not discern as constantly, and his hand does not guide us unerringly, and his spirit does not watch and care for as vigilantly, as if it formed the one and exclusive object of his attention.”

§ 8. *Thirdly.*—The power of God is displayed in renewing the depraved heart of man, in order to the enjoyment of the blessings of redemption. On this point I borrow the statements of a late excellent work on the Perfections of God, consisting of discourses, though not distinguished by profundity, since they were designed rather to be popular than philosophical, which will well repay your perusal,—I mean the “*Scripture Character of*

*God*," by Mr. [now Dr.] Burder.. "There is no power, either human or angelic, which can change the purposes, or rectify the dispositions of the heart of man. You may apply force and compulsion to the body; you may subject it to the scourge—to the torture—to the rack; but you cannot by any coercive means revolutionize the sentiments of the mind, or direct to other objects the affections of the soul. You may suggest considerations, and urge inducements, well adapted to the purpose at which you aim; but powerful as the motives may appear, their combined force may be opposed by a resolute and effectual resistance. You may employ all the persuasive tenderness of parental affection, and all the dignified authority of magisterial power, and all the penetrating sagacity of one who well knows the most direct avenues to the heart,—and still it may be all in vain. The desired change it is however perfectly easy to the Omnipotent to effect. He has a key which opens every heart. He can touch the secret spring of feeling. He can conduct into a new channel the current of the affections. He can terminate the reign of enmity, and establish the dominion of love. He can renew the heart of man, for he made it; and most worthy of himself is the operation of the power by which the renewal is effected. With all the authority of omnipotence, and all the milder majesty of love, he has said, 'A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh,' &c. The actual exertion of this regenerating and transforming power is attested by thousands who are living around us, and by myriads who—cleansed by the blood and sanctified by the spirit of Christ—are now presenting their grateful adorations before his throne. Shall

we, then, ever despair of the continued operation of the same power? In looking around upon the unconverted at home, or in contemplating the character of the distant heathen, shall we ask with desponding minds, 'Can these dry bones live?' Perfectly easy is the work of vivifying the dead to the omnipotent Author of life. Let the word proceed from the spirit of the living God, and they shall start forth in all the energy of life and health—an exceeding great army."\*

*First.*—We learn that Jehovah needs neither our praises nor our services; it is his condescension, and his goodness to us, that leads him to accept of both. Prayer is necessary for us, because assistance is necessary; and assistance is requisite on account of our weakness. Were we omnipotent, we could never be in danger—never in want. Such, as we have seen, is the case with God. He who created all things must have all good in his possession. He must be unspeakably blessed, from the infinite resources of his own infinite nature. What he receives from his creatures must be for their sakes, not his. Our goodness cannot extend to him. Giving cannot enrich him; neither can withholding impoverish him. With what awe ought we to approach him! *Secondly.*—The power of God, in connection with his promises, should encourage us in trials. *Thirdly.*—The power of God, in connection with the threatenings of his word, should awaken the fears of the ungodly.

\* Pages 32–34.

## LECTURE VI.

---

### MORAL PERFECTIONS OF GOD—RECTITUDE.

The importance of this class of perfections:—definition and illustrations:—rectitude—examination of terms:—the respects in which rectitude is to be ascribed to Jehovah:—proof of the doctrine—declarations of Scripture—the original state of all rational beings—the law—the judgments of God—redemption:—objections answered:—practical improvements.

§ 1. It is evident that this second class of attributes deserves our most attentive consideration; for, they constitute the glory of the Divine character. Knowledge and power, standing alone, unassociated with any tendencies good or evil of a moral kind, are not in the slightest degree adapted to awaken affection and inspire confidence. When they exist in connection with depraved moral tendencies, they are objects of dislike and fear. A being such as some of the heroes of classic story are exhibited would be a monster, whom it would deserve, as Foster says, a conspiracy of the nations to chain or to suffocate. And if boundless knowledge and almighty power could exist in union with injustice or malevolence, they would be infinitely to be dreaded and hated. It is, then, the moral perfections of Jehovah that spread so bright a halo of glory around him. They

constitute, in fact, the character of God,—that by which he especially desires to be distinguished, by which he would ever be known. It is not said “all powerful” or “all-wise,” but “holy and reverend is his name.” And when Moses besought the Lord to show him his glory,—“I will,” said Jehovah in answer to his request, “make all my goodness pass before thee.” “And the Lord descended in the cloud,” says the historian, “and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.” And such being the case, it may be most truly affirmed of all those who have no spiritual view of the moral character of God, or, in other words, those to whom his moral character does not appear supremely excellent and lovely, however correct may be their apprehensions of his omnipotence and omnipresence,—it may, I say, be most truly affirmed of them that they are ignorant of God. “He that saith, I know him,” said the apostle, “and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.”

Under the class of the moral perfections of God are usually included holiness, justice, truth, faithfulness, goodness, mercy, patience, sovereignty, wisdom, &c. Now before we proceed any further on this important subject, it may be well to advert to the very natural and obvious question, viz., “Are these to be considered as so many distinct and separate attributes,—or, if not, into what general divisions do they resolve themselves?”

§ 2. An attribute is something attributed to God. Care however must be taken upon this subject, that we do not conceive of the Divine attributes as something totally distinct from the Divine Being himself. They are

necessary tendencies of the Divine mind, or, Jehovah himself considered as possessed of certain essential moral qualities. At the same time as omnipotence is not omniscience, so there might be so broad a line of distinction between those moral perfections which constitute the Divine character as to justify us in considering them all as separate and distinct attributes. I scarcely think, however, that this is the case. It appears to me that they may be easily and manifestly resolved into two, viz. holiness or rectitude, and goodness. The whole list of moral attributes, mentioned a short time ago, may be fairly considered modifications of one or other of these. "The love of God," says an esteemed writer, "is presented to our view in the sacred Scriptures under various aspects. When we contemplate the love of God in its most extended manifestations to the universe of created beings, it assumes the aspect of benevolence or *goodness*. When we view this perfection in its exercise towards creatures continuing in a state of rebellion against God, it may be fitly designated *patience*: when engaged in forgiving the sins of the guilty, and relieving the miseries of the wretched, it is denominated *mercy*: when exercised towards those who are restored to the Divine favour, it displays the character of *complacency*: and when," adds this author, "engaged in the fulfilment of its gracious promises, its appropriate appellation is *faithfulness*." \* Instead of classing faithfulness here however,—which it strikes me should come under the other general division,—I would introduce wisdom; and say that goodness, when engaged in devising and executing the best means for the promotion of the best ends, is fitly denominated *wisdom*. This last perfection, viz. wisdom, Mr. Burder—whose words I just now

\* Burder, p. 159.

quoted to you—seems to place in the list of natural attributes; though it manifestly possesses a moral character, being combined, as Dwight observes, of knowledge and benevolence. And as patience, mercy, wisdom, &c., are so many modifications of love,—justice and faithfulness are manifestly modifications of holiness or rectitude. They are the moral purity, or integrity, or uprightness of the Divine character shining forth in his conduct towards the creatures of his power.

I must not fail here to apprise you of the system of those divines who first speak of holiness as comprehending all that belongs to the moral character of Jehovah, and then again resolve this holiness into love, *i.e.* benevolence or goodwill; so that benevolence is, so to speak, the radical moral tendency or property of the Divine mind, from whence all the others naturally and necessarily spring, and of which they are to be considered modifications. To the support of this statement they bring many plausible and apparently powerful arguments. The holy law of God, it is alleged, which is a transcript of the Divine character, requires nothing but love or goodness; so that he who loveth as the law requires is perfectly conformed to the law, which is the same with being perfectly holy. The apostle John declares that God is love, by which assertion the whole of his moral character is expressed. When God promised to proclaim his name—*i.e.* his character or glory—to Moses, he said, “I will make all my goodness to pass before thee,” *i.e.* as though he had said, I have no glory to show but my goodness: this is the whole of my moral beauty and excellence. In support of this statement, it is also further alleged that holiness, justice, and faithfulness manifestly resolve themselves into love. Holiness is the love of moral purity in general; and justice and truth are nothing

different from the love of the manifestations of moral purity in the conduct. "Injustice," says Dr. Hopkins, who advocates this system, "is directly opposed to good will; and goodness will not injure any one. He therefore who is perfectly good must be perfectly just; and goodness is, and always will be justice. And infinite benevolence or love disposes to maintain and vindicate the rights of all; to administer justice and judgment in all cases; to condemn and punish the injurious, as far as is necessary, to make compensation to the injured. For as universal goodness seeks the greatest general good, it can do no wrong; and is therefore opposed to all ill will, and everything that is contrary to the rights of any being, and to the highest general good." In like manner, he argues concerning faithfulness and truth. "He who is infinitely benevolent must be unchangeable in truth and faithfulness; for love or goodness is itself truth and faithfulness, acted out in that particular manner, and towards those particular objects, in which it obtains this denomination. There can be no truth and fidelity where there is no goodness; and where the latter is, there, in the same degree, is the former. Love therefore still appears to comprehend all moral rectitude and excellence; and justice or righteousness and faithfulness in the Divine Being is nothing but universal infinite benevolence, considered with relation to particular objects, and as acted out in particular circumstances."

Now though there is much plausibility in this reasoning, I confess I am not satisfied with it. It displays too much of that rage for simplifying, which has led some metaphysicians to deny that sympathy is an original principle of the mental constitution, and to resolve what has been usually considered as the operations of



benevolence into a refined feeling of self-love. This view of the moral nature of the Divine Being is not sufficiently broad and deep. It precludes the possibility of ascribing rectitude or holiness to the Divine Intellect. What! is there no such thing as rectitude or holiness of perception or of view, as well as rectitude of feeling? Holiness may be predicated of the understanding as well as the affections of any rational being; but if the holiness of God be nothing more than the love of benevolence, it is manifest that it can never be said of the understanding of Jehovah that it is holy.

Were I disposed to simplify, I might contend perhaps, not that rectitude resolves itself into love, but, *vice versa*, that love resolves itself into rectitude; for the rectitude of God, in the most comprehensive sense of the term, is *that which God is*, since whatever he is, is right. His benevolence then is one branch of his rectitude. Not being very solicitous, however, to push our speculations to the extent to which, after all, they might perhaps be justly carried, I am content with that statement which resolves all the moral attributes of Jehovah into two, *viz.* holiness or—as I would rather denominate it—rectitude, and goodness,—and proceed accordingly to direct your attention to the first of these attributes.

#### THE RECTITUDE OF GOD.

§ 3. “Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name?” say the blest inhabitants of heaven, “for thou only art holy.”\* What then is meant by holiness as an attribute of the Divine Being? The Hebrew term *kodesh* [קֹדֶשׁ] and the Greek *hagios* [ἅγιος] seem to bear the radical signification of separation. The vessels of the temple of old were holy, *i. e.* were set apart from a com-

\* Rev. xv. 4.

men to a sacred purpose. Believers are also, because they are separated, so to speak, from sin, from its guilt and pollution, that they may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. God is in like manner holy, because perfect moral purity distinguishes his nature, his will, and the whole of his conduct.

A celebrated critic, Dr. Campbell, indeed contends that the term *ἅγιος*, in its application to God, is to be understood in the sense of *venerable*. To sanctify the Sabbath is to treat it with respect. To pray that the name of the Lord may be sanctified is to express an earnest desire that it may be honoured or revered or venerated. To say that God is holy is to say that he should be venerated. "It is worthy of notice," says this able writer, "that when the term holy is applied to God, and accompanied with other attributives, they are such as infuse fear rather than love, and suggest ideas of vengeance rather than of grace. When Joshua found it necessary to alarm the fears of an inconsiderate nation, he told them, 'Ye cannot serve the Lord, for he is a holy God, he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions and sins.'"<sup>\*</sup> This passage, however, fails to prove the Doctor's position. It was manifestly intended to show that they were unfit to serve God, in consequence of their guilt and his purity. And to a sinful being the holiness of Jehovah is as fearful an attribute as his majesty.

By the holiness of God we are, then, to understand Jehoyah's entire and perfect separation or freedom from sin, both as it regards his nature, his volitions, his feelings, and his conduct. This definition includes what theological writers have denominated negative and positive holiness; for when the moral nature develops or unfolds itself in acts either of the intellect, will, or

<sup>\*</sup> Dissertation VI., part iv., § 14.

affections, freedom from sin necessarily supposes and involves in it a right exercise of those powers—hatred of everything that is evil, and love to everything that is good.

§ 4. *First.*—Holiness or rectitude regards the nature of God. That is all purity, without even the shadow of a stain. I am aware of the extreme difficulty of defining the nature of any being, if it be understood as something distinct from the actual exercise of the intellectual or moral powers, which I at least certainly think it is; and accordingly on that account, and also because I shall have occasion, before the close of this lecture, to touch upon this important point again, I waive for the present any further remarks upon it, and pass on to observe that—

*Secondly.*—Holiness or rectitude regards the intellect or the perceptions of Jehovah. His understanding is light; and in it there is no darkness at all. His knowledge of all possible as well as actual existences is perfect. No error, no mistake, mingles itself with his views of things. And to his all-pervading eye, every object of a moral character, concerning which we are so especially apt to form erroneous conceptions, appears in its true colours. He perceives the full deformity of vice, how carefully soever her real features may be disguised,—and the true and unrivalled excellence of virtue, how much soever she may be on the contrary misrepresented and maligned. Further—

*Thirdly.*—Perfect holiness or rectitude regards all the Divine volitions. In a being capable of volition, and susceptible of affections, perfect rectitude in the understanding must insure perfect rectitude in the will. It is, indeed, impossible for them to exist in a state of separation from each other. The volitions and affec-

tions of all beings must be in accordance with the views of the understanding; so that since the knowledge of Jehovah is perfect, since every object of a moral character appears in its true light to him, he must in all cases will, that which is right. All his volitions must be in entire accordance with his immaculately holy nature; all his desires and all his affections must be placed upon holiness, and with a degree of ardour and tenacity proportioned to their infinite strength.

*Fourthly.*—Perfect holiness or rectitude regards the conduct of God. That is in entire consistence with the rectitude of his own nature and the eternal and unchangeable principles of justice. Not one act of his moral government—a government extending over thousands and millions of worlds—can be justly impeached. The more carefully is his conduct examined, the more deeply convinced shall we become that he is “righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.” Such is a brief sketch of the rectitude of God. To this it may be added that Jehovah is essentially and necessarily holy. His understanding is not like created understandings, capable of ignorance as well as knowledge; so his will is not as created wills, capable of unrighteousness as well as righteousness. The holiness of God is underived. “He is holy from himself,” says an excellent writer,—“creatures are holy by derivation from him.” The holiness of God is unparalleled and infinite. As all the wisdom, excellence, and power of the creatures, if compared with those of God, are but folly, vileness, and weakness,—so the highest created purity, if set in parallel with God, is but impurity and uncleanness. “Thou only art holy,” it is said in the book of the Revelations. “The heavens are not clean

in his sight," "and his angels he charged with folly." "Though God," says one, "hath crowned the angels with an unspotted sanctity, and placed them in a habitation of glory, yet, as illustrious as they are, they have an unworthiness in their own nature to appear before the throne of so holy a God,—their holiness grows dim and pale in his presence. It is but a weak shadow of that Divine purity, whose light is so glorious that it makes them cover their faces out of weakness to behold it, and cover their feet out of shame in themselves. They are not pure in his sight, because though they love God, which is a principle of holiness, as much as they can, yet not so much as he deserves. They love him with the most intense degree according to their power, but not with the most intense degree according to his own amiableness; for they cannot love God infinitely, unless they were as infinite as God, and had an understanding of his perfections equal with himself, and as immense as his own knowledge. God only having an infinite knowledge of himself can only have an infinite love to himself, and consequently an infinite holiness without any defect: because he loves himself according to the vastness of his own amiableness, which no finite being can."

#### PROOF OF THE DIVINE RECTITUDE.

§ 5. Our first proof is derived from the express declarations of the inspired volume. How often is he denominated the Holy One, the Holy One of Israel! Thrice is this attribute repeated by the seraphim, who cried with the utmost reverence to each other, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts;" and it is said of the representatives of the church in the heavenly temple; that they rest not day nor night, saying, "Holy, holy,

holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come." And not only is Jehovah declared to be holy, but it is said of him that he is "glorious in holiness." It is this which constitutes his supreme excellence and beauty—that which renders him the object of admiration, reverence, and love; and so calls forth the loftiest ascriptions of praise from all the pure in heart, both on earth and in heaven.

*Secondly.*—The holiness of God is proved by that state of moral integrity in which the intelligent part of the creation came out of the forming hand of God. There can be no excellence in the effect which is not in the cause, otherwise that excellence would be uncaused. As therefore the understanding of the creature proves that the Creator is an intelligent being, so the primitive holiness of the creature proves that the Creator is a holy being. And holiness was an attribute of all the intelligent part of the creation in their original state. God, being holy, could not set his seal upon any rational creature, but the impression would be, like himself, pure and holy also. Angels in their primitive state must all have been holy; they doubtless were so: we read of their first estate, which they lost by sin; the state itself must then have been a sinless state. Man also, we are assured, was made upright, in the image of God; which the apostle declares consisted in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. God had exhibited his power in other creatures, but in man he determined to manifest what he most valued in himself; and therefore he formed him in his own image—morally upright, with a wisdom which is the rectitude of the mind, with a purity which is the rectitude of the will and affections. "And thus," says one, "doth the clearness of the stream point us to the purer fountain, and the brightness of

the blaze evidence a greater splendour in the sun from which it is emitted."

*Thirdly.*—The holiness of God is conspicuously displayed in his law; for it is not more certain that the character of an individual may be ascertained by the general current of his voluntary conversation, than that of a ruler by the nature of his laws. The law of God has been called a transcript of the general nature of God. It cannot indeed be otherwise. It is an exhibition of his heart. If the law is holy, God must be holy; for it commands nothing but what he loves, and forbids nothing but what he hates. And that the law is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good, has never yet, I believe, been questioned by any. It prescribes all that becomes a creature towards God, and all that becomes one creature towards another of his own rank and kind. It forbids and condemns all manner of evil in deed, word, and thought; it forbids evil as evil; it enjoins righteousness as righteousness; and it enjoins not only perfect but perpetual obedience to all its commands. The author of such a law must needs be a holy—a perfectly holy Being.

*Fourthly.*—The holiness of God may be seen in the judgments which have been inflicted upon such as have violated the law. For these judgments evince the high regard which Jehovah bears to his law, or, in other words, his love to holiness. In the destruction of the old world—in the fire and brimstone which laid waste the cities of the plain—in the punishment of his chosen people, the Jews, and their final ejection from the land of promise, we see that the Divine law is not to be violated with impunity. And why? Because of the high sense the Lawgiver entertains of its excellence; or, in other words, because it is so perfect a

transcript of his moral nature. He who touches the law touches the apple of his eye. He curses the earth, therefore, for the sake of man, after man had become a sinner; and the whole creation was made subject to vanity by that event, to show the Divine abhorrence of his conduct.

*Fifthly.*—The holiness of God is displayed with especial lustre in the work of redemption. It appears in his refusal to pardon sin without an atonement. For what constituted the moral impossibility to his doing this? Was it anything besides his utter and irreconcilable aversion to all kinds and degrees of moral pollution? It appears, further, in the heavy load of suffering sustained by the surety when he stood in the place of the guilty. For that surety was Jehovah's equal and fellow: he sustained the most intimate and endearing relation to him,—he was his Son, his own Son, his only begotten Son, who had dwelt in his bosom from all eternity, on whom the affections of his heart were placed with an intenseness of which we are utterly unable to form any adequate conception. Surely the law will abate some of its demands, when such a being as the Son of God appears in the room of the guilty. Surely the Father cannot pour out the full cup of his indignation upon him. A single drop, we are ready to imagine, is all that can be allowed to fall upon him. No. He drank the cup of our sorrows, even to the dregs. The entire curse of a violated law lighted upon his head. The wrath of God was let loose against him. The Father hid his face from him; he was stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. Well may it be said, "that not all the vials of judgment that have been poured out, or shall be poured out, upon the wicked world, nor the flaming furnace of a sinner's conscience,



nor the "irreversible" sentence pronounced against the rebellious devils, nor the groans of the damned creatures, give such a demonstration of God's hatred of sin as the wrath of God let loose upon his Son."

#### OBJECTIONS TO THE RECTITUDE OF GOD.

§ 6. FIRST.—Against the statement of the Divine holiness or rectitude, it has been objected that the whole of the previous train of reasoning is overturned by a single fact or two.

*In the first place*, by the fact of the introduction of moral evil into the world. If Jehovah be so holy a being as you would fain exhibit him, says the objector, how came he to permit the entrance of sin? I answer, first, God is not the author of sin. Man did not sin on account of any actual unholy tendencies implanted in him by God, nor of any direct influence exerted upon him by God. The cause of sin, as I shall endeavour to show you in another part of our course, is exclusively in the creature himself; it is the necessary dependence of all created nature upon omnipotent and sovereign influence and power, or a tendency to defection morally considered—analogous to a tendency to annihilation physically considered,—a tendency which is not the result of creative energy, which was not given by God, but which is nothing more than that limitation and weakness which of necessity belongs to the creature as a creature, which it is beyond the power of omnipotence to remove, inasmuch as no being by nature dependent can be rendered independent. All the concern which Jehovah had, or could have, in the sin of man was, not exerting omnipotent and sovereign influence to support him, so that he was left to the unchecked influence of those causes which led ultimately to his melancholy

lapse. But as the sun is not the cause of darkness by withdrawing his beams, so neither was God the author of sin by permitting the weakness of the creature to exert its native influence upon his character, and to plunge him into rebellion against his Maker. But—

*Secondly.*—I observe that Jehovah, in refraining from exerting his mighty power to prevent the entrance of sin, was influenced by motives of infinite value and importance. No being must do evil that good may come. It were infinitely dishonourable to Jehovah to attribute such conduct to him. But not upholding the creature is not doing evil; it is refraining from doing anything. The most that can be said of it is, that it is refraining from doing good; and if any one should object that that is in effect doing evil, I would answer that that remains to be proved. If I see a fellow-creature about to bring upon himself some inconvenience and pains, and had it in my power to preserve him from taking so foolish a step, it might be said that I was guilty of unkindness, if I did not put forth my preserving power; and so I freely admit I should, if the good that was to result from the step was not likely to ~~over~~balance, either to himself or to others, the inconveniences flowing from it. But if it was likely to do this, the case would be altogether different. I could not even in that case be justified in impelling a man into inconvenience and pain, but even goodness itself would hold back my hand, and prevent my using any measures to preserve him from them. To apply these remarks to the case before us,—if the sin of man should ultimately issue in the production of more glory to God, and more happiness to being in general than could have been secured in any other way, who will be bold enough to say that notwithstanding this he was peremptorily bound to step

forwards and prevent it? or rather, who will not say that goodness required him—yes, required him—not to impel the sinner into transgression—that be far from God—but to stand by, and to refrain from exerting his powers of preventing the deed, and then to do what is so glorious and god-like—to bring a revenue of praise to himself, and of blessedness to the universe, out of the guilt and sin of the creature?

SECONDLY.—It is objected to the holiness of God that he sometimes, in his providence, presents objects to men which become to them the occasion of sin. This, it may be answered, is their own fault, and not the fault of God. Jehovah is the moral governor of the world. He is to pronounce upon all men the final decision at the great day, according to their character and their conduct. To evince his justice in this decision, it is necessary that their characters should be fully developed. And it is to effect this development that he tries them, by visiting them with the merciful or trying dispensations of his providence. And if wealth should lead to pride—if drunkenness and debauchery should follow upon the possession of abundance—or if the trial of poverty should lead to theft and profanity, is the blessed Jehovah to be reproached on that account? How is the government of the world to be carried on without such trials of character? and how are such melancholy issues to be always avoided, unless saving and confirming grace be always imparted? and how can a moral system be established at all, if this be the case? These failures cast no imputation upon Divine holiness.

THIRDLY.—There is yet one more speculation upon which I am tempted to enter before I conclude this lecture; it was glanced at some time ago. I can, per-

haps, best bring it forwards in the shape of an objection to the statement which has been given of the rectitude of God. It will perhaps be said, then, that these statements, and indeed the general statements which are given upon the subject, involve a mode of reasoning which is no better than reasoning in a circle. Rectitude, you tell us, is the separation or the opposition of the Divine nature to sin; and when you come to define sin, you tell us, on the other hand, it is opposition to the Divine nature. Now what instruction is conveyed by this? Do you not, after all, leave us in the dark as to what sin is, or what rectitude is? or rather, do you not very inadequately define both? Now I do confess I think there is some force in this objection. It is certainly reasoning in a circle, to say that holiness or rectitude is opposition to sin, and then that sin is opposition to holiness. And it was on this account that I said, some time ago, that rectitude, in the most comprehensive sense of the term, is, *that which God is*, or conformity to the Divine nature. Hence what God thinks, and feels, and wills, and does, is right, for that very reason, or rather because all his thoughts, and feelings, and volitions, and conduct, are in entire harmony with his nature—the ultimate standard of virtue. There are metaphysicians who appear to write as if they thought that there is an eternal standard of right and wrong—entire, separate, and distinct from the nature of God—which existed previously to our conceptions of the Divine existence, and that the rectitude of the Divine character results from its conformity to this standard. I cannot assent to the correctness of this representation. That there is an eternal standard of right and wrong, I have no doubt; yet is it not something distinct and separate from the great First

## LECTURE VII.

### MORAL PERFECTIONS OF GOD—JUSTICE.

Definition of the doctrine:—the ways in which it may be violated in the functions of government:—God's government in accordance with justice:—what perfect justice requires in the law:—the connection of justice with punishment and rewards:—the full display of justice reserved for the great day, proofs of—Scripture—benevolence of God:—pardon of sin, a difficulty:—mistaken view of the atonement; its source.

§ 1. OF this attribute it has been already said, that it is a modification of rectitude or holiness: or perhaps it would be more correct to define it as the exercise or visible manifestation of rectitude in the conduct of God towards the subjects of his government; for justice is one of those attributes which supposes the existence, and indeed requires the existence of other beings besides God in order to its exercise. The phrase, indeed, *the justice of God* is sometimes used as if it were synonymous with the righteousness or the holiness of God; and for general and popular purposes this phraseology may be correct enough, yet is there considerable difference between the ideas suggested by the two terms. Jehovah would have been a God of holiness or rectitude although no being had existed in the universe besides himself,

because rectitude, as we have seen, is what God is, or his nature is the standard of holiness. But in that case justice could not, I think, with propriety have been predicated of him, because justice supposes the establishment of a system of moral government, and relates to the conduct of God as the moral governor towards every being connected with that government. Where no system of moral government exists, as would be the case if Jehovah existed alone, there would be no room for the exercise of justice. In that case even the great First Cause would be infinitely holy; but he could be scarcely said to be just, unless justice be conceived of as an attribute of the Divine nature prompting him to act justly. In that case, however, it could not be distinguished from the general rectitude of the Divine character. It is better therefore to conceive of justice, and to define it, as it was defined, a short time ago, viz. as the exercise or visible manifestation of rectitude in the conduct of God towards the subjects of his government.

§ 2. Now there are three ways in which justice may be violated by an individual who assumes the character and office of a governor. There may be, *First, iniquity in the very assumption of the office itself.* He may have no right to rule; and in that case justice is violated by the very attempt to take hold of the reins of government. Or, *Secondly, there may be iniquity in the manner in which he conducts himself in the office,* though, that office should be rightfully vested in him; and that in two respects,—the laws by which he conducts the affairs of his government may be unjust; or, if that should not be the case, they may be unjustly administered.

I proceed to show, then, that in neither of these respects can injustice be ascribed to God; and accordingly observe that—

§ 3. FIRST.—He is just in assuming the office of governor. He has an indisputable right to rule over all intelligent beings,—for we need not at present extend our observations to any others that are to be found in this vast universe,—a right far more complete and perfect than any that can be used by men in possession of earthly sceptres. For on what are the claims to supreme authority in this world too frequently rested? In some cases, all the right to take the post of government is that which superior power can give; and in no case can it be higher than that which is conveyed by the free election of the people. The right of God to rule over us, on the contrary, is grounded on the circumstance of his having created us. It is not derived from our consent; nor is it abrogated or extinguished by our want of consent. It has not its basis on his power merely, though that power is almighty; but on that power as exerted in our original formation, and in the constant support of that existence which has been derived from his power and goodness. That the Creator has a right to govern the creature is a truth as intuitively certain as that two and two make four, or that the whole is greater than any of its parts. Jehovah is accordingly just in assuming the office of governor. By taking the reins into his own hands, there is no transgression of rectitude in his conduct towards those who are made subject to his government. There is, on the contrary, a visible manifestation of the rectitude of his nature; for rectitude requires him to place every being in that station which it is fit and proper for him to occupy.

SECONDLY.—God is just in his manner of discharging the office which he has so rightfully assumed. He rules by just and equitable laws, and these laws are justly

administered. It is often said of justice, that it is that attribute of the Divine nature by which he is disposed to render unto all exactly according to their due. This is doubtless correct, as far as it goes; but it limits the range and the exercise of justice. It supposes not only that Jehovah has assumed the reins of government, but also that there is a law, by their conformity or non-conformity to which the desert of men is to be estimated. And by defining justice as that attribute which renders to all their due, we leave no room for its manifestation and exercise in the appointment of the law itself; whereas justice may be as much violated in the establishment of a code of unwise and inequitable laws, as in the mal-administration of the most perfect system of speculative legislation.

Let us then, *in the First place*, contemplate the justice of God as it shines in the law which is the rule and instrument of his moral government. A law is just which enjoins the affections and conduct which befit the various relations sustained by the individual or individuals who are subjected to its authority. Of the relations themselves, it may perhaps be said, that at any rate some of them are arbitrary,—depending, solely, upon the sovereign pleasure and wisdom of God for their existence. Jehovah would have formed us very different beings from what we are at present, and the relations which we sustained to each other might have consequently been very different also, if, so it had seemed good in his sight. But the affections and conduct which grow out of these relations are by no means arbitrary. That there should be a creature at all, depended, solely, upon the sovereign pleasure of God; but, that that creature should reverence and obey its Creator resulted from the very nature of the case. That we should sus-



tain the relation of parents and children to each other is a mere arbitrary appointment; but that relation being established, it becomes morally fit and proper that parents should protect their children, and children love and obey their parents. Thus every constituted system of connection and relationship imposes certain duties upon those who are included in it; and that law is a just law which enforces these duties—which enjoins the affections and conduct which morally befit beings sustaining such relations to each other.

And such is the law of God. Having imparted existence to mankind, and fixed the relations they shall sustain to himself, to each other, and to other beings in the universe, his law is in fact nothing more than a declaration of the affections it becomes them to cherish, and the conduct it is morally fit and proper for them to adopt, considering the circumstances in which they are placed. Do you ask me—what is the measure or standard of this moral fitness or propriety? I answer, the infinitely perfect nature of the ever blessed God himself. That conduct which, in fact, becomes the various relations they sustain is that which he sees to be morally fit and becoming—that which *appears* so, to that all-perfect intellect in which there is no darkness, either of ignorance or of moral pollution, at all. The requirements and prohibitions of the law exhibit, therefore, the rectitude of the Divine nature; and it is said to be just, because it contains a visible manifestation of the rectitude of God in his conduct towards the subjects of his government.

That the law of God deserves this character is expressly affirmed by the sacred writers. The law of the Lord is perfect—the statutes of the Lord are right—the commandment of the Lord is pure—the judg-

ments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. And a single glance at the law will convince us that the sacred writers have pronounced a true and righteous decision. Its substance is thus stated by the Lawgiver himself,—“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself.” “How just,” says one, “is the demand, how reasonable the requirement! How lofty and how pure the sentiments inculcated! how admirably calculated to secure the glory of God, and the happiness of man! Less than this, surely, the Creator and Proprietor and Governor of all things cannot require! less than this, surely, man himself, if in his right mind, cannot wish to render! How can we desire to be released from the obligation of a law which commands me to fix my best affections on the best of beings, and to love with strongest attachment him who is altogether lovely! and who is himself the source of all that is amiable and all that is pleasurable! And further, how can we desire to be released from the obligation of a law which requires me to cherish brotherly affection to those who are the offspring of the same parent, endowed with the same powers and sympathies, and rendered capable of augmenting my happiness, while I am aiming at the advancement of theirs!”

§ 4. The words which I have just quoted suggest an observation, which it may be well to bring a little more prominently into view before I pass from this part of the subject, viz. that perfect justice in God, as the moral governor, requires that this law be so framed as that it shall be adapted to secure his own rights as well as those of his creatures. That such is, in fact, the character of the Divine law is beyond all question. It puts God prominently forward as the first object to be regarded. The first and great command is, “Thou

shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." And whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we are required to do all to the glory of God. Now is there anything in this requirement of that overweening attachment to self by which the characters of too many of our fellow-creatures are sometimes disgraced? By no means. Jehovah *ought* to be the first object to be regarded. He is infinitely the most important being in the universe. Perfect rectitude—while it requires that the rights of the meanest of his subjects should have all the security which law can give to them—will not, surely, allow that his own be left unguarded. No. The Moral Governor must be just to himself. The sentiments and feelings and duties which spring out of the relation which the creature sustains to him can no more be left unenforced, by commands and threatenings, than those which grow out of the relation which the creatures sustain to each other. To say that they can *no more* be disregarded, is, indeed, to say greatly less than we ought to affirm: for in proportion to the importance of maintaining the rights of any individual in the great system of being is the degree of injustice involved in disregarding them; and to maintain the rights of Jehovah is, with reference to all the creatures of his power, a matter of paramount, yea, of infinite importance.

*Secondly.*—Let us contemplate the justice of God as it shines in the administration of that system of laws which, as we have seen, had their origin in perfect rectitude. The corrupt administration of a code of equitable laws will place a nation in almost as deplorable a condition as though the laws themselves were radically unjust and tyrannical. It is of infinite importance to

the universe, therefore, that in this point of view pure and unquestioned justice should mark the verdict of the Supreme Judge. To be just in the administration of a system of laws is to render unto all who are under their authority exactly according to their due,—to award to the obedient, if the law attaches any reward to obedience, that honour to which by the voice of the law they are entitled; and to inflict upon the rebellious the kind and degree of punishment which is meted out to them by statutory enactment. An unjust judge is one who condemns the innocent, or pardons the guilty, or inflicts upon the transgressor a measure of suffering either less or more than that which the law fixes upon as his due; for justice in a lawgiver, as it regards the administration of law at least, *i.e.* justice in a judge, is in fact the correct application of the general promises or threatenings of the law to the particular case or cases which are brought before him. If an accused person proves his innocence, any infliction of suffering would be unjust, because the law says punishment is only to be inflicted upon the guilty; if, on the contrary, he fails to prove his innocence, and the law fixes upon twenty stripes as the due reward of his crime, a judge would be unjust who should order him to suffer either more or less, because in the one case—the equity of the law being supposed in this illustration—he would suffer more, and in the other less, than he deserves, while perfect justice consists in rendering to him exactly according to his due, of which the law is considered the true and exact measure. And such is the representation which an inspired writer has given us of the justice of God, in administering that perfect system of laws which has originated in the infinite rectitude and benignity of his nature. In the day of the revelation of the righteous

judgment of God, he, will render, says the apostle Paul, "to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: for there is no respect of persons with God."

In the passage which I have now read the sacred writer carries forward our views to the great day, as constituting the time when the justice of God in the administration of his law will be exhibited. He does not mean, you will instantly perceive, that Jehovah is not just in the administration of his law *now*, or that the rectitude of his character is not at all developed in this world in this point of view; but he intends that it will then be fully developed. The present state is not the state of retribution; it is the season for the development of character. Hence, though we have unquestionable indications that there is a God that judgeth in the earth, yet it is sometimes well with the wicked and ill with the righteous in this world. But hereafter, when time and opportunity have been given for a full development of character, then will be the season for the display of the Divine justice, and then will all men be able to appreciate it.

§ 5. In the passage which has been now quoted, you will observe also that the apostle sets before us the double office of justice, so to speak, as exercised in rewarding the righteous and in punishing the wicked. The melancholy lapse of man, however, confines in a

great measure the exercise of justice to the latter of these cases. Were the original constitution, or the law given to man in innocence, to constitute the rule by which all mankind are to be judged, there would be no room for justice to display itself, but in awarding and executing that punishment to which the violation of law exposes every transgressor. The apostle, therefore, in the words which I have just read, is merely to be understood as affirming that the perfect rectitude of the Divine Being will ensure his rendering to all according to their deserts. Or we may conceive of him as putting an hypothetical case. To those who are contentious, &c., he will render indignation and wrath; and upon those, on the other hand, who patiently continue in well doing, or perfectly obey the law under which they are placed, *if such there be*, he will bestow eternal life. And though, with respect to those who enjoy Divine revelation, the great law of the gospel, which enjoins upon all men repentance and faith in order to salvation, and not the law given to Adam in innocence, is that, by which they will be tried, yet, as obedience to that law only entitles a man to salvation in consequence of the covenant and promises of God, the awarding of salvation to him on that account can scarcely be said to be an act of justice; or if it be, it is rather an act of justice to the Saviour than to the believer himself. The kingdom of heaven is the reward of that perfect righteousness of the Son of God, in consequence of which Jehovah can honourably connect salvation with faith, and not of the act of the sinner giving credit to the testimony of God concerning the Saviour. Yet as all men are to be judged hereafter according to their works,—*i. e.* as nothing but good works, or obedience to the Divine commands, will be accepted at the great day as valid

evidence of faith, or, in other words, as the characters of men, either as believers or the contrary, are there to be ascertained by an inspection of their conduct,—there is room for a previous display of justice in deciding whether the actual conduct of men exhibits valid and satisfactory proof that they are believers on the Son of God, before its solemn and awful development and exercise in the eternal banishment of those who obey not the gospel from his presence and the glory of his power. And in this, which I have called the previous display of the justice of God—a display by which will be effected that grand separation of the whole human family into two companies, of which so graphic a description is given by the evangelist Matthew,—in this display we are all most deeply interested. Here the justice of God will shine most conspicuously. His perfect wisdom will enable him to divide the sheep from the goats, and his perfect justice will prevent his placing a single sheep on the left hand, or a single goat on the right. No natural softness or amiableness of temper, no general correctness of conduct which does not spring from a principle of faith, will tempt the judge to place such an individual among the company of believers; and no imperfections and occasional lapses, which do not prove the entire absence of the principle of faith, will provoke the Judge to place an individual among the company of the proud rejectors of the great salvation. Justice, strict and impartial, unbiassed by any of those considerations which too frequently influence the decisions of earthly judges, will pronounce the decision on a careful inspection of the spirit and temper and conduct of the vast assembled multitude, whether they sprang from, and are to be regarded as sufficient evidence of, faith in the Son of God, without which no individual

can be saved; and with respect to those on whom a negative decision is pronounced, justice will further proceed to execute upon them the sentence to which they have exposed themselves. "Depart from me, ye cursed," will be the language of the Judge, "into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

§ 6. *This display of Divine justice is reserved for a future day, and therefore cannot be proved in the same manner with those of which I have previously spoken. To show that the justice of God is exhibited in the law, which is the instrument of his moral government, we had only to take that law into our hands and carefully examine it; and the very first glance we directed towards it was sufficient to convince us that a law which enjoins us to love God with all our heart, and mind, and strength, and our neighbour as ourself, must be completely just. To prove that the proceedings of the great day will mark and develop the justice of God, we must adopt a different method. We cannot actually inspect those proceedings, because they are in the distance, and under the veil of futurity; but we can contemplate them in the glass of certainty, because inspired testimony, which, like an immense mirror placed at a considerable distance before us, and catching a prospect of that which we are not far enough advanced to see, throws back upon us the rays which have fallen upon it. The Bible declares that God will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; and hence it is called the revelation of the righteous vengeance of God. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him; for he shall eat the fruit of his doings. Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him." "And I saw the dead," says the apostle John,*



“small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.”

In addition to these positive and unequivocal assertions of the justice of God, and of that display which will be given of it at the great day of account, it may be observed, to adopt the statements of an excellent writer, “that the character and circumstances of God strongly lead us to believe in his perfect justice. God is perfectly independent, and completely secure against every possible loss and evil. Whatever he pleases to have existence, or to be done, is certainly brought to pass, and in the precise manner which is pleasing to him. Hence no temptation or inducement to any injustice can exist with respect to him. Possessing all things, he can need nothing; contriving all things, he can fear nothing; effecting all things which he chooses, with infinite ease, and no possible obstruction, he can never have occasion to adopt any other character or conduct but that of perfect justice. Injustice in our experience is always derived, and of course flows from the dread of some disadvantage, or the desire of some advantage, which otherwise would not exist. But these things have no possible application to God. Reason sees not, therefore, how God can be under any inducement to injustice, but without such inducement injustice cannot exist.”\*

The justice of God may be further argued from the benevolence of God. “The most superficial survey of

\* Dwight's *Theology*, Sermon X.

the world which he has formed may convince us he is good to all—that he giveth liberally to all his creatures—that he is disposed to confer upon them much more than on any principles they can justly claim.. Can it be supposed, then, that under any circumstances he will refuse to grant that which is actually due? We ascribe justice to him who satisfies every rightful claim; we ascribe goodness to him who spontaneously grants more than can be claimed. He then who is ever disposed to grant the greater cannot be disinclined to grant the less. Since God is good, he cannot but be just.”\* Thus argue both Dwight and Burder; and it must be admitted, I think, with perfect conclusiveness. Yet their statements only go to prove that a just God will never give the creature less of good than his due. They fail to prove that, unless on the supposition of some remarkable expedient to render the bestowment of good consistent with justice,—they fail to prove, I say, that he will never inflict upon the creature less of evil than his due. In other words, they fail to support what is called the primitive justice of God. Yet that Jehovah will render a reward to the ungodly is rendered as certain by the goodness as the justice of God. The Divine law is a declaration of what a creature must be and do in order to be happy. Surely then benevolence, as well as rectitude, must enforce obedience to such a law as this. Yet, as the current of unsanctified passions runs strongly against it, it is impossible to conceive that it would ever be obeyed, if destitute of penal sanctions to enforce it; and these penal sanctions would have no influence, if they were not enforced; i. e. if the threatenings of the Divine law were not executed, we might look for nothing less than universal rebellion against God. Should it be said that this reasoning only

\* Burder, pp. 111, 112.

goes to prove that Jehovah *must issue* threatenings to preserve men from sin while in the present state of moral discipline, not that he must execute them hereafter, I answer—without referring to the truth and justice of God, which would be implicated by their non-execution—that even benevolence itself may require the future punishment of the finally impenitent. For benevolence must prefer the good of the whole to the good of a part; and perhaps the awful spectacle may be necessary throughout eternity of the dreadful evils which disobedience brings upon all intelligent beings—may be necessary, I mean, as a moral means for confirming even those who shall enter the heavenly mansions in their love to holiness, and their determination to consecrate their expanded and celestial powers to the service and glory of God.

§ 7. Such being the nature of Divine justice, a difficulty seems to present itself with reference to the pardon of sin. If justice requires a judge to inflict the exact amount of punishment upon a transgressor which his sins deserve, what room is there for forgiveness? Did it merely restrain him from inflicting *more*, there would be no difficulty at all; but when it renders it imperative upon him to inflict *as much*—when it does not allow that in the day of retribution he should curtail the number of stripes which the law awards to his crime, how can the salvation of any sinner be effected? This, as you well know, was the grand difficulty which the infinite wisdom of God had to encounter in devising the scheme of mercy. It is a difficulty which no finite intelligence could have surmounted. Jehovah surmounted it by permitting the sentence of the law to take its course upon the sinner's surety; by whose substitution, and consequent sufferings in the room of

transgressors, the great ends of moral government were as effectually—or rather, I should say, more effectually—secured than if the offender had paid the debt of punishment he owed to the justice of God in his own person. For though in this wonderful transaction the letter of the law, which made no provision for pardon—which demanded the death of the transgressor himself—which required that the precise kind and measure of punishment which his sins deserved should be inflicted upon him,—though, I say, in this wonderful transaction the letter of the law was not regarded and satisfied, the Saviour not being the transgressor himself, nor bearing the same sufferings, the same in kind and degree, which the sinner must have sustained—a thing which is utterly impossible,—though the letter of the law was not regarded and satisfied, the spirit of it was—the great object to secure which, under any system of moral government, strict justice must be displayed and exercised, viz. to secure the stability of the government by preventing the inroads of sin was accomplished, and Jehovah can now accordingly be just, *i. e.* not violate justice, while he is the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. It is recorded of an ancient lawgiver that he framed a law threatening the loss of both eyes to any man guilty of the crime of adultery. His son was the first transgressor. How could the judge be just, and yet spare his son? The expedient devised was that the father and son should each suffer the loss of one eye. Now here, though the letter of the law was disregarded, its spirit was preserved. The great object for which the law was framed, and to secure which it was necessary for justice to be exercised, viz. the prevention of the crime of adultery, was accomplished; and hence the lawgiver, without counteracting the great ends of govern-

ment, could act with clemency towards his son. This instance may serve in some measure to illustrate that wonderful transaction, which is, however, in many respects a case *sui generis*, and which will call forth the grateful and adoring praise of the whole redeemed family throughout eternity.

§ 8. Some writers have referred us to the believer's exemption from punishment, in consequence of the death of Christ, as a display of the justice of God, and as demanded by strict justice. This language I think incautious. The atonement of Christ only renders forgiveness not inconsistent with the Divine character; it does not render it necessary that God should accept the sinner on the ground of justice—at least of justice to him. The statements to which I have now referred are prompted by what I cannot but imagine to be misapprehensions concerning the nature of the atonement. The individuals to whom I now allude seem to suppose the satisfaction for sin made by the Redeemer essentially to resemble the satisfaction made for a debtor by paying the debt which he owed. In this case, it is evident that if the creditor accept the payment from a third person, he is bound in justice to release the debtor. As the two cases have been supposed to be similar, it has been concluded that, since Christ has made such a satisfaction for sinners, God is in his justice also bound to release them.

"This, however, is an unfounded and unscriptural view of the subject. There is no substantial resemblance between the payment of a debt for an insolvent debtor, and the satisfaction rendered to distributive justice for a criminal. The debtor owes money; and this is *all* he owes. If then all the money which he owes is paid and accepted, justice is completely satisfied, and the

creditor can demand nothing more. To demand more, either from the debtor or from any other person, would be plainly unjust. • When therefore the debt is paid by a third person, the debtor is discharged by justice merely. But when a criminal has failed of doing his duty, as a subject to lawful government, and violated laws which he is bound to obey, he has committed a fault, for which he has merited punishment. In this case, justice, not in the commutative, but in the distributive sense—the only sense in which it can be concerned with this subject—demands, not the future obedience, nor an equivalent for the omitted obedience, but merely the punishment of the offender. The only reparation for the wrong which he has done required by strict justice is this punishment,—a reparation necessarily and always required. There are cases, however, in which an atonement may be accepted—an atonement by which the power and efficacy of the government may be preserved, and yet the offender pardoned. In such a case, however, the personal character of the offender is unaltered. Before the atonement was made, he was a criminal; after it is made, he is not less a criminal. • As a criminal, he before merited punishment; as a criminal, he no less merits it now. The turpitude of his character remains the same; and while it remains, he cannot fail to deserve exactly the same punishment. After the atonement is made, it cannot be truly said, therefore, any more than before, that he does not deserve punishment; but if the atonement be accepted, it may be truly said that, consistently with the honour of the government and the public good, he may be pardoned. This act of grace is all that he can hope for; and this he cannot claim on account of anything in himself, or anything to which he is entitled, but only may hope,

from the mere grace or free gift of the ruler. Before the atonement was made, the ruler—however benevolently inclined—could not pardon him, consistently with his own character, the honour of his government, or the public good. After it is made, he can pardon him, in consistency with them all; and, if the offender discover a pénitent and becoming disposition, undoubtedly will, if he be a benevolent ruler.”\*

Dwight, 8vo. edit., vol. ii., pp. 412-3.

## LECTURE VIII.

### MORAL PERFECTIONS OF GOD—VERACITY.

Veracity, or truth, and faithfulness, modifications of rectitude :—proofs of the Divine veracity, *first*, from the attributes of God :—*second*, from the constitution given to man :—*third*, from the Scriptures :—*fourth*, from the history of the Divine dispensations :—*fifth*, from the personal experience of the godly :—objections stated and answered :—lessons taught by this doctrine.

§ 1. THE veracity, or truth, and faithfulness of God are manifestly only modifications or branches of the general attribute of rectitude. “Veracity,” as it has been very well defined, “is speaking, or, as the case may be, acting according to a state of things seen, or supposed to exist;” *i. e.* it is speaking rightly, or with rectitude. Faithfulness is conforming our conduct to previous declarations, in which the precise line of conduct had been marked out. There is, then, very little or no difference between veracity and faithfulness, as these terms are used with reference to God. We indeed confine the latter of them to the accomplishment of the Divine threatenings and promises, especially the latter; and as the entire efficacy of a system of moral government depends upon the certainty with which its subjects may look for the enjoyment of its rewards or the infliction of



its penalties, it is well, perhaps, for us to have a word which marks out this particular manifestation of veracity. But in truth, as there is no distinction of time past, present, and to come, with God, the conformity of the Divine declarations with the actual state of things, or with the Divine conduct, is equally a display of veracity, whether those declarations relate to events which have taken place, or which remain to be accomplished at a future day.

When therefore we speak of the veracity and faithfulness of God, we mean that all that he declares is according to the real state of things and events,—that all that are at present—that all transactions which are passed, as well as all that are to come of which he has spoken, will be in exact and entire accordance with what he has spoken,—that all his threatenings will be executed, and all his promises fulfilled.

§ 2. FIRST.—The Divine veracity and faithfulness may be proved by an appeal to those attributes of God already considered and established. For, *in the first place*, all that has been said in proof of the holiness of God may be referred to in support of his veracity. For whether veracity and faithfulness be considered modifications of holiness or not, it is perfectly self-evident that they must be inseparable from it. There is nothing more manifest than that all wilful departures from the truth are criminal. If then holiness be Jehovah's entire and perfect separation from sin,—and if the violation of promises, and any kind of deceit, be sinful,—it is self-evident that Jehovah must be a God of truth.

2. Further: the veracity and faithfulness of God may be inferred from his benevolence. “Can it be for one moment supposed that he who is infinitely happy in

himself, and who is good to all, would make a revelation to his creatures with the design of misleading their minds, of conveying incorrect ideas of things to them unseen, or to excite expectations by promises of blessings in store for them never to be fulfilled? If to entertain such a supposition would be equally absurd and impious, then, admitting the benevolence of the Divine nature, which I shall hereafter endeavour to prove, we are necessarily impelled to conclude that all the representations of the word of God must be correct, without the least admixture of error, and that all the promises it records will be to their full extent assuredly fulfilled."

3. Again: the absolute independence of God supports our confidence in his veracity and faithfulness; for it places him immeasurably above the reach of all temptations to violate the truth, even in the slightest degree, in any of his statements, or threatenings, or promises. Depraved as men are, a gratuitous liar is a monster whom we seldom or never see. All men tell the truth, when not under the influence of a powerful motive to the contrary. The more carefully we examine the matter, the more fully shall we be convinced, I imagine, that falsehood is invariably prompted by motives and feelings which have no place, and can have no place in the mind of God. We sometimes regret the conduct we have adopted, and, under the influence of shame and grief, give a false account of the part we have acted. But as God is of one mind, and none can turn him,—as he can be the subject of no regrets, he can be under no temptation from this source to violate the truth. We sometimes dread the consequences of speaking the truth,—we may sustain some loss in property or character ourselves, or may inflict some injury upon others thereby. But to Jehovah

nothing can be an object of dread : he has nothing to fear—he can have nothing to fear from preserving the strict line of truth in the whole of his communications with his creatures; and therefore he will never deviate from it. We are frequently unable to perform our engagements. Even granting that our purpose may remain unaltered, our power may be diminished. We are dependent creatures, *dependent upon God*. The hour of accomplishment may find us in the chamber of affliction, or upon the bed of death. *We are dependent upon one another*; so that if our own individual energy remains undiminished, the concurrence and assistance of others—on whom we had calculated when we entered into the engagement,—being withheld, we may be utterly unable to fulfil it. But Jehovah is omnipotent and independent. With respect to him, therefore, the hour of accomplishment must find him in the full possession of an infinite plenitude of power to do as he has spoken.

4. The immutability of God affords an argument in support of his veracity and faithfulness. For as Jehovah contrived and executed all things, the original state of things must have been according to his pleasure, because, in fact, it was the result of his pleasure; and as he is immutable, this state of things, while it remains, must be always according to his pleasure. To speak then, as it has been well argued, in agreement with the real state of things—i. e. to speak the truth must be, as it has been properly stated, according to his pleasure; while to speak not in accordance with the real state of things must be in opposition to his pleasure. It is therefore a contradiction, in the very nature of the case, to suppose that he can utter any declarations which are inconsistent with truth. And to say that Jehovah is

immutable and faithful are all but identical propositions. A promise unfulfilled, or threatening not executed, necessarily supposes some change in the individual who issues it—some change, either of will or of power. If with respect to God mutation can exist in neither of these respects, it is perfectly unwarrantable and absurd to doubt his faithfulness.

§ 3. SECONDLY.—Besides the proof afforded by these perfections of the Divine nature, the doctrine receives further corroboration, *First*, from the fact that God “has so formed his intelligent creatures that they irresistibly esteem and respect truth, and disesteem and despise falsehood.” On this point I borrow the excellent and unanswerable statements of a late valuable writer. “This respect for truth, and contempt for falsehood, is irresistible from two causes. It is, in the first place, the necessary dictate of the understanding when employed in examining the nature of these subjects, and is perfectly independent of any feeling or influence of the heart. Knaves—as truly and as irresistibly as honest men—despise knaves. No other dictate of the understanding was ever found in the present world: no other is capable of existing.”

“*Secondly*.—He has made truth absolutely necessary to the happiness of mankind, and invariably productive of it; and falsehood utterly inconsistent with our happiness, and invariably productive of misery. In this great practical lesson, he has in his providence forced mankind to esteem and respect truth, without a possibility of its being otherwise, and to disesteem and despise falsehood.

“This argument strongly proves the truth of God in two methods. In the first place, by teaching us to respect truth and despise falsehood, he has irre-

sistibly led us to respect him if a God of truth, and to despise him if a God of falsehood. But if he be not a God of truth, this fact is utterly irreconcilable with the only end which he can be supposed to have had in view in creating intelligent beings. Secondly: he has in this manner strongly impressed on the minds of his creatures his own character as a God of truth. As a being perfectly independent, he could have no inducement to impress any character on their minds except that which pleased him. That which pleased him more than any other was unquestionably his own character. As an immutable being, it cannot be supposed that he could disclose to them any character as his own, except his real character. If then the character actually disclosed by him as his own, is not his real character, it must have arisen from one of these sources,—either he was afraid to disclose his own character, or, by some other motive inconsistent with his independence, was inclined to disclose a character with which he was not pleased; or he preferred some other character to his own, or, in some strange moment and situation incomprehensible by us, departed from his general disposition, and, denying his nature, acted in a manner directly opposite to all his essential attributes, which irresistibly prove him to be immutable. Neither of these will be asserted. The character therefore which he has actually disclosed, is his true character.”\*

§ 4. THIRDLY.—The Scriptures strongly and repeatedly assert the truth and faithfulness of God. “God is not a man,” say these sacred records, “that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?” “The Strength of Israel,”

\* Dwight's *Theology*, Sermon XI.

said Samuel, "will not lie nor repent; for he is not a man, that he should repent." "In hope of eternal life," said the apostle Paul, "which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it with an oath: that by two immutable things, on which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." "He is the Rock," said Moses, "his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he." "The word of the Lord," said the Psalmist, "is right; and all his works are done in truth." And again: "I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations. For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever: thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens." These I have only brought forwards as a specimen of the various texts in which the truth of God is affirmed in the Scriptures. Should it be argued, that as the truth of God must be presupposed and admitted before we can admit the truth of his declarations; so it is absurd to bring those declarations to evince his truth, as it will be arguing in a circle,—I answer "No," because his declarations have been found in innumerable instances to accord with facts; and therefore we are warranted in placing confidence in his declarations generally. Which remarks lead me to observe that—

§ 5. FOURTHLY.—The truth and faithfulness of God may be gathered from the history of the Divine dispensations. "The question;—Is God faithful?" says

one, "naturally suggests another,—Has he proved himself faithful in the ages that are passed, and can satisfactory proofs of the fact be adduced? The faithfulness or unfaithfulness of men may, in many cases, be ascertained by an appeal to promises which have been attested, and to covenants which have been solemnly executed." Turn then to the Bible. It is the record of Divine promises, covenants, and engagements, attested by methods the most solemn; it is a record which has been for ages entrusted to the custody of the church, and open to the inspection of the world. Examine then its pages; scrutinize the evidences of its antiquity and its authenticity; compare the records of the Bible with the history of the world,—and let that history be taken even from the pens of the enemies of revelation. It will be found that the great outlines—the leading facts in the history of nations, both ancient and modern, are attestations to the truth of Scripture prophecy and promise, and therefore legitimate and incontrovertible proofs that God is faithful. Examine the promises given to the ancient patriarchs of the possession of the land of Canaan by their descendants, at a specified period; and hear the testimony of Moses with regard to its fulfilment. "Because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandment, to a thousand generations."\* Examine the prophecies which regard the destinies of Egypt and of

\* Deut. vii. 8, 9.

Babylon, and of Nineveh, and of Tyre, and of Jerusalem; and to the pages of authentic history let the appeal be confidently made, in order to determine the momentous question which regards the veracity and the faithfulness of God. Having instituted with seriousness, and prosecuted with candour these inquiries, you will be prepared to advert to the record of the grand promise originally made to the first parents of our apostate race; and having traced its gradual disclosures and amplifications to Abraham, to David, to Isaiah, and to all the prophets, you will then be prepared to behold in the scenes of Calvary, and in their glorious results, the full and incontestible evidence of the assertion that God is faithful.

§ 6. FIFTHLY.—The faithfulness of God is evinced by the personal experience of all the people of God, in every age of the church.

The argument which applies to the whole community of the faithful collectively applies to every one of them individually, and therefore admits in every instance of a personal appeal. Such an appeal may be confidently made to every Christian persuaded that the sentiment expressed by the venerable captain of Israel, at the close of his long and brilliant career, is the sentiment which to the full extent of their past experience they will be prepared to adopt as their own. “Ye know in all your hearts, and in all your souls, that not one thing had failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.”\* Among your richest treasures are the exceeding great and precious promises of God. They are applicable to all the scenes through which we are called to pass—to

\* Joshua xxiii. 14.



all the exigences we can feel—to all the trials which belong to our earthly allotment. Of these promises, numerous as they are, can we specify one, which we have rightly understood, legitimately applied, firmly believed, and earnestly pleaded, which in the course of the Divine procedure has in your own experience been violated? When we can do this, we may impeach the God of truth, we may reject the Bible as false, and abandon our minds with impunity to the most determined scepticism.

§ 7. The objections against this doctrine are of the same kind with those which are brought against the immutability of God, and are to be answered in the same manner. They are derived—

*First*, from the non-execution of the Divine threatenings. The general reply is that those threatenings which were not executed, although they may have been unconditional in form, were not so in reality. They were suspended on the future conduct of those against whom they were denounced. The case of Nineveh has been already considered. The circumstances attending the 'first threatening have been supposed by some to form a difficulty. "In the day thou eatest thereof," said God, "thou shalt surely die." On this declaration, it may be observed, first, that the threatening was in certain respects executed the very day—yea, the very moment—in which our first parents sinned. If the word *death* be understood in a legal sense, they were immediately brought into a state of condemnation, which in a forensic sense is often called death,—they were immediately separated from God, the fountain of blessedness, and plunged into all that depth of misery which was the consequence of their fall; or if death be considered as intending the separation of soul and body,

or the eternal punishment of their transgression, it is sufficient to say that the principal thing intended in the threatening was man's becoming liable to it. "Certainly," says one, "God did not intend so to tie up his own hands as to render it impossible for him to remit the offence, or to recover the fallen creature out of this deplorable state; and therefore if you take death for that which is *natural*, which was not inflicted till 930 years after, then we may say that his being exposed to, or brought under an unavoidable necessity of dying the very day that he sinned, might be called his dying from that time. And the Scripture will warrant our using the word in that sense, since the apostle, speaking to those who were by sin liable to death, says, "The body is dead because of sin," *i. e.* it is exposed to death, as the consequence thereof, though it was not actually dead. And if we take death for a liableness to eternal death, then the threatening must be understood to contain a tacit condition, which implies that man was to expect nothing but eternal death, unless some expedient were found out, which the miserable creature then knew nothing of, to recover him out of that state into which he was fallen.

2. The non-performance of the Divine promises has been urged as an argument against the truth of God. There are many promises of spiritual blessings the enjoyment of which some Christians do not experience in this world. The promise of increase of grace is not actually fulfilled while the people of God are backsliding from him—nor those which respect the assurance and joy of faith in one who is sinking into the depths of despair—nor those which respect the presence of God in his ordinances to such as are destitute of the influence of his grace therein, &c. And in relief of this supposed

difficulty an excellent writer has stated,—first, that there is no promise made whereof there are not some instances of its accomplishment in kind: secondly, that those who are denied these blessings may possibly be mistaken when they conclude themselves believers: thirdly, that in denying these blessings God often takes occasion to advance his glory some other way, by trying the faith and patience of his people, and overruling all for their good in the end, which is an equivalent for those joys and comforts which they are deprived of: and, fourthly, that all those promises which have not had their accomplishment in kind in this world shall be accomplished in the next with the greatest advantage. Some of these reasons may not be destitute of weight perhaps, while others are very questionable; and they none of them touch upon the point which fully relieves the difficulty. The proper solution of the case is, I apprehend, that all those promises which are not fulfilled in the experience of any of the people of God are conditional promises. They suppose watchfulness, prayer, and exertion on their part; and being negligent or remiss in the discharge of these duties, they receive not the promise. God has promised, for instance, the Holy Spirit to his people, but not unconditionally: the promise is suspended on their asking him, and asking him in a proper manner. The truth of God would be really implicated, if an instance could be found in which a Christian implored this blessing aright, and did not receive its communication; but no such instance can be found. We have not because we ask not, or because we ask amiss; and as the blessing is not promised in the case of our failing to ask, or asking improperly, the faithfulness of God is not implicated in the non-bestowment of it.

.In like manner, God has promised that his people shall

renew their strength. But neither is this promise an unconditional one. The promise is evidently suspended on their waiting upon him. It would be an incompetent indication of the Divine faithfulness, to say that he does not bestow the blessing he has engaged to impart with a view to try their faith, or that he will bestow upon them a compensation in another world. Let God be true, though every man should be a liar. If Christians do not renew their strength, it is because they do not wait upon him in the sense and manner in which the word is to be understood in the passage under consideration. The Christian, or rather the Calvinistic world, has been in my opinion too squeamish about the use of the term conditions. There are, in fact, what amount to conditions, whether we choose to designate them by that term or not, *i. e.* there are certain states and exercises of mind, on the manifestation of which the blessings which God has promised, are suspended. If God is the moral governor of the world, it cannot be otherwise. This representation does not, in the slightest degree, infringe upon the doctrine of salvation by grace; nor is it at all at variance with the Calvinistic system, properly understood, because grace reigns and is manifested in originating and perpetuating those states and exercises of mind on the manifestation of which, as we have seen, the blessings which God has promised to his people are suspended.

LESSONS TAUGHT BY THE VERACITY AND FAITHFULNESS  
OF GOD.

§ 8. *First.*—We are taught by this subject the imperative obligation under which we are laid to believe what God has spoken. If Jehovah be a God of veracity and faithfulness, all, that he declares unto us, must be truth;

and that is the ground of obligation to believe it. I can scarcely avoid expressing my astonishment that a conclusion so obvious as this should ever have been overlooked by rational beings. That, if we have affections, we are bound to love that which is excellent, and whose excellence is revealed; and bound to believe that which is true, and of whose truth there is sufficient evidence, if possessed of understanding and judgment at least, is to my mind scarcely less manifest than that two things equal to the same are equal to one another, on the contrary. A mist has been thrown over the question, whether it is the duty of sinners to believe the gospel, by forgetting what is the ground of obligation to believe any report, viz. the truth of that report; and by the conduct of some who have represented faith, when exercised upon religious subjects, as an act of the mind totally different in its nature from that faith which is exercised with reference to the common affairs of life. Whereas the simple act of believing must be in all cases the same, as much as the act of loving. The objects of faith and love may be different, but the mental feeling and exercise is the same. Ungodly men know not the things of the spirit of God,—they cannot know them, for they are spiritually discerned. Christians, on the contrary, do know them. So that the different effects of these things upon the mind of a Christian and a mere professor is to be ascribed, not to any difference in the exercise of mind called forth in these characters, if the latter believes anything at all about Divine realities, and is not a mere hypocrite, but to the different truths in the view of the mind which the faith of each contemplates and receives. Faith is belief in the ordinary sense of the term; and our obligation to believe the gospel, and indeed all that God has revealed, does not rest upon any supposed moral

ability to believe: it is **totally** independent upon the state of our minds,—it rests upon the truth of that which we are called upon to credit; and therefore the veracity and faithfulness of God shows the imperative obligation under which we are laid to believe all that he has spoken.

*Secondly.*—This subject teaches us the absolute security of the people of God with reference to the ultimate enjoyment of heaven. “My sheep,” said Christ, “hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” “No,” says the great champion of Pelagianism in this country, the late John Wesley,—“No, but they may wriggle themselves out;” so that the faithfulness of God is not implicated in their coming short of heaven. And if the doctrine about conditional promises which has been stated this morning be true, is there so much absurdity as we are accustomed to imagine—perhaps ready to say—in this tenet of Arminianism? Is not their final salvation suspended on their final perseverance? It is “he that endureth to the end shall be saved.” But then though some promises of God are conditional, others are not; and there are absolute promises that the people of God shall be enabled to persevere, which secure them against final apostacy. God has engaged to keep his people by his mighty power through faith, and thereby to keep them in the faith, unto eternal salvation.

*Finally.*—The subject teaches us the certainty of future punishment to the wicked. “Let no one harden himself in his iniquity,” says one, “or think that because the threatenings are not yet fully accomplished, therefore they never shall: it is one thing for God to delay to

execute them, and another to resolve not to do it. We may vainly conclude that the bitterness of death is past, because our houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them: but let it be considered that the wicked are reserved for the day of destruction; they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this."

## LECTURE IX.

### MORAL PERFECTIONS OF GOD—DIVINE GOODNESS.

Definition and illustration of:—proof of; *first*, from the supremacy of the Divine nature:—*second* proof, from benevolent motives necessarily present to the mind of the Deity:—*third* proof, from the character and dictates of the human intellect:—*fourth* proof, the provision made for the happiness of the creature:—objections to the preceding reasoning met:—the bearing of the fact, that some animals prey on others, on the argument:—the statements of Paley and Watts.

§ 1. THE goodness of God denotes that tendency of the Divine nature which prompts him to do good, or to impart blessedness to others. I do not now use it to express the perfection of the Divine essence or nature, as it is sometimes used; but the freedom with which he pours the streams of his bounty upon the creatures whom he has formed, or rather the state of mind which prompts their communication. It is a part of the general rectitude of the Divine nature; for rectitude, as we have seen, in the most comprehensive sense, applies to all the tendencies of the Divine mind. Goodness is benevolence, denoting either the feeling itself as it exists in the mind of the great Eternal, or as mani-



ferred *ad extra*. It takes different names, according to the different lights in which it contemplates its objects, or the different states in which it finds them; but the feeling or attribute itself is one and the same. As exercised towards the creature merely as a creature, without regard to its moral state, it is called simply goodness or benevolence. Goodness to a miserable being becomes *mercy*, and to a sinful being becomes *grace*. When exercised in bearing with their sins, it is *patience*; and when employed in devising and executing the best means for promoting their good and his glory, it is denominated wisdom. Thus mercy, grace, patience, wisdom, &c., considered as denoting some feeling or principle or attribute of the Divine Being, are only modifications of goodness; or rather, they are goodness itself. Their immediate results are different. To communicate life, to relieve the afflicted, to pardon the guilty, to bear with the provocations of the rebellious, are very dissimilar things; yet the feeling or state of mind that prompts to them is the same,—it is goodness, or that tendency of the Divine nature that prompts him to do good, or to impart blessedness to others.

It will be gathered from hence that I dislike the statements of those who speak of goodness, mercy, grace, &c., as so many distinct or separate attributes, or as denoting states of mind or feeling in the Divine Being differing as much in themselves as do the terms by which they are denoted. It should never be forgotten that the sole difference is in the state of the object towards which goodness is exercised; yet as the exercise of goodness towards a being in a state of innocence does not prove that it will be exercised towards another in a state of moral delinquency, it may be as desirable, and even necessary, to institute a separate

proof of the mercy and grace, and patience and wisdom of God, as though these terms denoted so many distinct perfections of the Divine nature.

§ 2. The method therefore which I propose to adopt will be to enter upon a pretty full proof of the goodness of God; and then to state more briefly what may be necessary for the establishment of his grace, patience, &c., understanding all these terms in the sense which has just now been attached to them.

#### PROOF OF THE DIVINE GOODNESS.

*First.*—God, by his necessarily exalted nature, is infinitely removed above all temptation to an opposite temper and conduct. Actual and active malevolence among men is the result of the circumstances in which they are placed operating upon the natural principle of self-love, and uncontrolled by the power of Divine grace. The interests of our fellow-creatures frequently clash with our own; success for both parties is, it may be, in many cases, impossible. Self-love therefore engenders suspicion, fear, mistrust, falsehood; it leads us to envy others their good fortune, to rejoice over their fall. The possessions of others often awake the desires of self-love; and in the train of covetousness,—treachery, violence, blood, and murder are frequently seen to follow. Thus malevolence is the offspring of the self-love of man, insatiable as it ever is in its cravings, in union with the impotence of man, to give them full gratification without infringing upon the rights and happiness of others. And it does not appear, I think, that malevolence, without the temptation and influence of some such circumstances as those to which I have now alluded, would ever be displayed even by human beings. How then can we conceive of its finding a place in the mind of the

great Eternal? If man would not be malevolent were it not for the influence of powerful temptation, God must ever be a benevolent being, for he is infinitely removed above all temptations to the contrary. "All good," as it has been well said, "is actually in his possession; there is therefore nothing left for him to desire. All beings and events are exactly such as he chooses either to produce or to permit." "He can therefore have nothing to fear or to malign. As he gave all which is possessed by other beings, he can evidently neither gain nor receive any thing. If he be malevolent, then, he must sustain this character without a motive."

§ 3. *Secondly.*—There are motives of inconceivable force to the display of a benevolent spirit, which cannot but be ever present to the mind of Deity.

That he should sustain a benevolent character is necessary to the certain attachment and voluntary obedience of his creatures. Whatever be the character of God, he must desire the love of the beings whom he has formed, both on its own account, and for the sake of its consequences; for nothing but love can ensure obedience,—at any rate, the obedience which flows from any other principle must be such as he cannot fail to detest and despise. Now if Jehovah be not a benevolent being, it is impossible he should engage the affections of his creatures,—he would not be a proper object of love; for though many things may awaken fear, nothing but goodness can inspire love. Goodness must consequently be an attribute of God. Should it be objected that this reasoning does not prove that he is benevolent, but only that he must act benevolently, I would observe further, on this part of the subject; and the observation will contain an answer to this objection, in the words of an excellent writer.

“An omniscient being cannot but see that it is more glorious to himself, and more beneficial to his creatures, to sustain and exhibit a benevolent character than its contrary; or, in other words, in every respect more desirable.” And the perception of this desirableness must constitute an infinite motive to the Creator to cherish a benevolent character, and to manifest it in all his works. “To the power of this motive there is, at the same time, no motive opposed. On the contrary, we know—and the Creator in a manner infinitely more perfect knows—that the existence and exercise of a malevolent character would be infinitely dishonourable to himself, and in the progress of eternity infinitely injurious to his creatures. Each of these considerations presents an infinite motive to exercise benevolence on the one hand, and not to exercise malevolence on the other. If then he has in fact exercised malevolence, he has done it without any motive, against the influence of” a motive infinitely strong,—to suppose which is little short of infinitely absurd.

§ 4. *Thirdly*.—God has so formed us that we cannot but love and esteem a benevolent being, and hate and despise one of an opposite character. “This is not the impulse or dictate of the heart merely,” as a judicious author truly observes, “but the unavoidable dictate of the intellect—of the conscience and understanding. The intellect is so formed by the Creator that it is impossible for it to think otherwise. Any person who will make the attempt will find it, beyond his power to approve of malevolence at all.” And this natural tendency of the intellect, if we may so speak, to esteem and love benevolence, and to despise and hate malevolence, though manifested in all men, is yet to be seen in them, shining with increased brightness in proportion

to their advancement in moral purity. Can it then be conceived that man would have been thus formed, if his Maker had been a malevolent being? Can it be imagined for a moment that the great First Cause, to whom all our natural impulses and dictates are to be ascribed, would—acting voluntarily as he must have done—have impressed a tendency upon the intellect of man by which he would be irresistibly led to hate and despise that which he supremely loves and approves, and to esteem and love that which he supremely hates and despises? The supposition is incredible. And yet the absurdity and contradiction involved in the supposition that God is a malevolent being are not half-exhausted yet. For if such be his moral character, it follows, on the principles just stated, that he has rendered it utterly impossible for men to love that character,—he has so formed them that they are led by necessity of nature to hate and despise him; and they are further necessitated to do this—to borrow the strong language of an able work—“with the entire and irresistible approbation of their own understanding and conscience, and therefore without any possibility of a future conviction on their part that this conduct is wrong in them, or that they are on this account guilty, blameworthy, and justly punishable. On the contrary, they are furnished with a complete conviction that this conduct is right, praiseworthy, and rewardable,—a conviction which can never be removed nor weakened, and which will attend them through every period of their future being. Thus he has in the most perfect manner, and, at the same time, in the manner most perfectly unaccountable, formed intelligent beings so as effectually to prevent the only end which he could propose in their creation from ever being accomplished.”

"All these considerations are enhanced," says the same writer, "by the great fact, that God has so constituted the world as to make misery the only legitimate and natural consequence of malevolence, and happiness the only natural consequence of benevolence. In this manner has he irresistibly impressed these truths upon the minds of men,—exhibited them as practical certainties, visible in all their practical concerns; and thus fixed them beyond removal in the minds of all his rational creatures. When we remember that these things were contrived and chosen by an omniscient being, who of course discerned their real nature and import before he chose them, we cannot but discern that they grow necessarily out of the character of a benevolent Creator, but are utterly inconsistent with the opposite character." The whole of this argument is to my mind perfectly conclusive.

§ 5. *Fourthly.*—The provision which God has made for the happiness of his creatures in the present world bespeaks him to be a benevolent being. The character of the Creator is to be ascertained by the nature of his work. Adaptation in any particular contrivance to accomplish some obvious design argues skill in the contriver; and in like manner, happiness in beings capable of happiness displays the goodness of their Creator. Now the world abounds in happiness. "The air, the earth, and the water," says one, "teem with delighted existence. In a spring noon, or a summer evening, on whichever side we turn our eyes, myriads of happy beings crowd upon our view. The insect youth are on the wing. Swarms of new-born flies are trying their pinions in the air. Their sportive motions, their wanton mazes, their gratuitous activity, their continual change of place without use or purpose, testify

their joy, and the exultation they feel in their lately-discovered faculties. A bee among the flowers in spring is one of the cheerfulest objects that can be looked upon. Its life appears to be all enjoyment—so busy and so pleased; yet it is only a specimen of insect life, with which; by reason of the animal being half-domesticated, we happen to be better acquainted than we are with that of others. The whole winged insect tribe, it is probable, are equally intent upon their proper employments; and under every variety of constitution gratified, and perhaps equally gratified, by the offices which the Author of their nature has assigned to them.”

Similar observations might be made with regard to every part of animated nature; but I must confine my future remarks to the structure of man, and to the circumstances in which he is placed. Here I borrow the admirable statements of Paley. “The proof of the Divine goodness,” says this lucid writer, “rests upon two propositions. The first is, that in a vast variety of instances in which contrivance is perceived, the design of the contrivance is *beneficial*. The second, that the Deity has superadded *pleasure* to animal sensations, beyond what was necessary for any other purpose, or when the purpose, so far as it was necessary, might have been effected by the operation of pain.” In the general illustration of these propositions we meet with the following admirable statement. “When God created the human species, either he wished their happiness, or he wished their misery, or he was indifferent and unconcerned about either. If he had wished our misery, he might have made sure of his purpose, by forming our senses to be so many sores and pains to us, as they are now instruments of gratification and enjoyment; or by placing us amidst objects so ill suited to our perceptions

as to have continually offended us, instead of ministering to our refreshment and delight. He might have made, for example, everything we tasted bitter, everything we saw loathsome, everything we touched a sting, every smell a stench, and every sound a discord.

“If he had been indifferent about our happiness or misery, we must impute to our good fortune—as all design by this supposition is excluded—both the capacity of our senses to receive pleasure, and the supply of external objects fitted to produce it. But either of these, and still more both of them, being too much to be attributed to accident, nothing remains but the first supposition, that God when he created the human species wished their happiness, and made for them the provision which he has made with that view, and for that purpose.”

In support of the second proposition, this able writer thus reasons again, in another part of his work. Having admitted, as we must admit, that those properties or capacities which are necessary to the support or preservation of animal existence do not strictly prove the goodness of God, inasmuch as they “must have been found in any creation which was designed for continuance, although it is possible to suppose that such a creation might have been produced by a being whose views rested upon misery;”—having admitted this, I say, he goes on to observe that “there is a class of properties which may be said to be superadded from an intention expressly directed to happiness,—an intention to give a happy existence distinct from the general intention of providing the means of existence; and that is of capacities for pleasure in cases wherein, so far as the conservation of the individual or of the species is concerned, they were not wanted, or wherein the purpose might have been secured by the operation of pain. The provision which is made of a



variety of objects not necessary to life, and ministering only to our pleasures, and the properties given to the necessities of life themselves, by which they contribute to pleasure as well as to preservation, show a farther design than that of giving existence."

"Assuming," says he, to illustrate these remarks, "the necessity of food for the support of animal life, it is requisite that the animal be provided with organs, fitted for the procuring, receiving, and digesting of its food. It may be necessary also that the animal be impelled by its sensations to exert its organs. But the pain of hunger would do all this. Why add pleasure to the act of eating, sweetness and relish to food? Why a new and appropriate sense for the perception of the pleasure? Why should the juice of a peach, applied to the palate, affect the part so differently from what it does when rubbed upon the palm of the hand? This is a constitution which, as it appears to me, can be resolved into nothing but the pure benevolence of the Creator. Eating is necessary, but the pleasure attending on it is not necessary; it is superadded to what is strictly essential, and can only have flowed from the goodness of God.

§ 6. To this reasoning it will perhaps be objected, that if the provision which God has made for the happiness of his creatures be appealed to in proof of his goodness, it ought to be admitted, on the other hand, that the pain they suffer is an indication of malevolence. Now I have so stated the objection as to lead you to the true solution of it, viz. that there is no provision made, generally speaking, for the sufferings they endure. With respect to man, leaving out for the present the consideration that, being a sinner, the sufferings he endures are many of them penal, or the direct consequence of his own misconduct,—leaving out of the consideration these

important facts, it is obvious—to reply as Paley has done—that the evil or suffering of which so much has been said is never, that we can perceive, the object of contrivance. “Teeth are contrived to eat, not to ache: their aching now and then is incidental to the contrivance, perhaps inseparable from it; or even, if you will, let it be called a defect in the contrivance; but it is not the object of it. This is a distinction which well deserves to be attended to. In describing implements of husbandry, you would hardly say of the sickle that it was made to cut the reaper’s hand; though from the construction of the instrument, and the manner of using it, this mischief often follows. But if you had occasion to describe instruments of torture or execution,—this engine, you would say, is to extend the sinews; this to dislocate the joints; this to break the bones; this to scorch the soles of the feet. Here pain and misery are the very objects of the contrivance. Now nothing of this sort is to be found in the works of nature. We never discover a train of contrivance to bring about an evil purpose. No anatomist ever discovered a system of organization calculated to produce pain and disease, or in explaining the parts of the human body ever said—this is to irritate; this to inflame; this duct is to convey the gravel to the kidneys; this gland to secrete the humour which forms the gout. If by chance he come at a part of which he knows not the use, the most he can say is that it is useless: no one ever suspects that it is put there to incommode, to annoy, or to torment.” Such is the state of the fact with regard to man, though man is a sinful being; and, therefore without at all inquiring for the present whether all the evil he actually suffers may or may not be penal evil, we may ask with confidence, if Jehovah must not be a benevolent being.

§ 7. With respect to animals, it may be said perhaps,

the present; and that, even admitting their sensations of pain to be as acute as ours while they remain, they have a share of sensations of pleasure during their lives which outweigh those of pain. The best reply, however, is given by Dr. Paley, the substance of which is as follows. Immortality upon this earth being for obvious reasons out of the question, the question is what mode of taking away life, since it must be extinguished, is best—best for the animal itself, best for the system with which he is connected? In answer to the first, the Doctor states that the three methods by which life is put an end to are—acute diseases, decay, and violence. Animals have few acute distempers; nor would it be deemed an improvement of their lot to subject them to their influence. If animals died by natural decay, in what a condition of suffering and misery would they be involved before the close of their lives! “Is it,” asks the Doctor, “to see a world filled with drooping, superannuated, half-starved, helpless, and unhelped animals that you would alter the present system of pursuit and prey?” Surely, it is best for the animal, remembering that he has no fears or anticipations of death, that it should remain. With reference to the system with which these animals stand connected, the Doctor states that “the system of animal destruction ought always to be considered in connection with another property of animal nature, viz. superfecundity. They are counter-vailing qualities. One subsists by the correction of the other.” He goes on to show the advantages which are gained by the powers in nature of producing a superabundant population, and then states that these advantages are so many reasons for the appointment and perpetuation of this system of animal hostility.

The advantages of providing for an abundant popu-

lation are two: first, it tends to keep the world always full; and, secondly, it allows the proportion between the several species of animals to be differently modified, as different purposes require, or as different situations may afford for them room and food. Where this vast fecundity meets with a vacancy fitted to receive the species, there it operates with its whole effect; there it pours in its numbers, and replenishes the waste. And without this tendency to abundant increase, many parts of the world must at times be left destitute of animated beings, which does not seem a state of matters so worthy of God.

"But then," adds the Doctor, "this superfecundity, though of great occasional use and importance, exceeds the ordinary capacity of nature to receive or support its progeny. All superabundance supposes destruction, or must destroy itself. Perhaps there is no species of terrestrial animals whatever, which would not overrun the earth, if it were permitted to multiply in perfect safety,—or of fish, which would not fill the ocean; at least, if any single species were left to their natural increase without disturbance or restraint, the food of other species would be exhausted by their maintenance. It is necessary, therefore, that the effects of such prolific faculties be curtailed. In conjunction with other checks and limits, all subservient to the same purpose, are the thinnings which take place among animals by their action upon one another. In some instances we ourselves experience very directly, the use of these hostilities. One species of insects rids us of another species, or reduces their ranks. A third species, perhaps, keeps the second within bounds; and birds or lizards are a fence against the inordinate increase by which even these last might infest us. In other, more numerous, and

possibly more important instances, this disposition of things, although less necessary or useful to us, and of course less observed by us, may be necessary and useful to certain other species, or even for the preventing of the loss of certain species from the universe,—a misfortune which seems to be studiously guarded against. Though there may be the appearance of failure in some of the details of nature's works, in her great purposes there never are. Her species never fail. The provision which was originally made for continuing the replenishment of the world has proved itself to be effectual through a long succession of ages."\*

\* *Natural Theology*, chap. xxvi.

## LECTURE X.

### MORAL PERFECTIONS OF GOD—DIVINE GOODNESS.

(CONTINUED.)

Substance of preceding lecture recapitulated:—man, sinful, his pain and suffering no reflection therefore on the Divine goodness:—estimate of God's goodness enhanced by this:—*fifth* proof, the testimony of Scripture to the goodness of God:—*sixth* proof of Divine goodness, the nature and character of the law:—*seventh* proof, the atonement:—considerations—*depravity of man, the greatness of God's gift, the purpose of the gift, and the nature of the benefits conferred*—by which the Divine goodness is enhanced:—the grand objection to the Divine goodness, *the existence of moral evil*, considered:—the specific character and consequent result of this spiritual lapse considered.

§ 1. In my last lecture I endeavoured to prove that the provision which God has made for the happiness of his creatures evinces his goodness. The benevolent character of the Designer is unequivocally displayed by the benevolent tendency of his contrivances. Pain, in so far as we can judge, is never the object of any of them. Their obvious intention is to promote the comfort, as well as to continue the existence, of the beings whom he has formed. On the supposition then of the perfect innocence of man, the existence of natural evil

in the world would not overthrow the proposition which asserts the Divine goodness. The various pains which are occasionally suffered from different parts of the physical mechanism of the body may be something incidental to the contrivance, as Paley justly remarks, or, for aught we know, inseparable from it; but it is never the object of it. And therefore all the weight of the objection, if it have any weight, would seem to lie rather against the power than the goodness of God; though it can never be shown to invalidate the Divine omnipotence. Every created and dependent being must of necessity be a limited being—limited as to the degree of perfection and happiness it enjoys. The wisdom and goodness and power of God appear in providing in the best possible way for the happiness of the creatures respectively, considering the natures and capacities he has given them, and the rank he has appointed them to hold in the scale of being. Now it is impossible for us to say that those particular contrivances which the human frame exhibits, and which from their very nature must certainly expose us to occasional pain; may not after all be the very best which could have been devised to promote the object the benevolent Contriver had in view. Perhaps a physical constitution which would never have exposed us to the danger of suffering pain might not have been able to secure to us so much enjoyment, upon the whole, as that which we at present possess. Perhaps that delicate construction of the human frame, which exposes it of necessity to occasional injury and consequent suffering, was necessary to secure those vivid feelings of pleasure from animal sensation which we now enjoy. Perhaps a bodily conformation which would have shut out all pain might also of necessity have shut out all pleasure. I do not say

decidedly that it would have been so, but merely that it might have been so; and with a view to prove that, if man had been an innocent being, exposure to a measure of bodily pain would not disprove the benevolence of his Creator, because the constitution and conformation which necessarily subjects him to it might be adapted to secure to him a greater preponderance of pleasure than any other.

§ 2. But man is not an innocent being; and therefore if his exposure to a measure of pain would not necessarily disparage the goodness of his Creator, on the supposition that he *was* such, much less can it be supposed to do it when it is remembered that he is not. For who will venture to say whether much, or indeed all the sufferings which he endures, are not either the direct consequences of his own misconduct, or penal evils inflicted upon him by God on account of sin? It is too evident to be denied that much of the evil which men endure in this world is produced by themselves. We suffer greatly from poverty. But how large a part of human poverty is produced by sloth, profusion, intemperance, rashness, fraud, falsehood, contention, oppression, and war! We suffer greatly from disease. But what a vast proportion of the diseases in this world owe their origin to indolence, imprudence, intemperance, and other causes merely human! The same observations are applicable to many other things of the same general nature. In truth, men in all cases either originate or increase the evils suffered in this present life. And if such is the case, it is surely worse than absurd to deny that Jehovah is a God of goodness; because men, acting in defiance of his authority, and in opposition to the plainest and most peremptory commands, precipitate themselves into misery by rushing into sin!



And with respect to those evils which are directly inflicted upon men by the hand of God, who shall say that the major part, if not the whole of them, are not penal evils—the reward or punishment of their sins? Man was not designed originally to die: he was created in the likeness of God, who formed him in the image of his holiness and happiness, and designed him to live for ever, if he continued innocent. Death is, therefore, in all cases the consequence of sin, as well as every fatal distemper which issues in death; and though there are some sufferings which seem simply to grow out of bodily constitution, and which might have existed if man had not been a sinner, without impeaching the goodness of God,—yet even that constitution, if it underwent no change at the fall of man, may have been originally so framed, on the foresight of his apostacy, as to subject him to all the suffering he endures: so that all is, in fact, the consequence and the punishment of sin.

§ 3. And it is the consideration of the sin of man that so greatly enhances the estimate we ought to form of his goodness in the provision he has made for his happiness. It is on guilty beings that all the blessings of this world are bestowed. Now it cannot be doubted that the communication of good to an evil, ungrateful creature, is a far higher manifestation of goodness than the communication of the same good to a virtuous and grateful one. “As therefore all the blessings found in the present world are in every instance,” says one, “given to creatures of this evil character, the goodness of God in bestowing them is enhanced beyond all comprehension. An impartial and contemplative mind, when observing the conduct, and marking the character of the human race, cannot but be struck at the sight of such extensive beneficence, communicated unceasingly

for so many ages, to beings of such a character. The patience and forbearance of God, especially to such a world as this, are an illustrious proof of his benevolence. Mankind rebel against his government—accuse him of weakness, injustice, and cruelty—murmur against his dispensations—profane and blaspheme his name—refuse to him the only regard which they can render to him, viz. reference, love, and obedience,—and pay this regard to men and beasts, reptiles and stocks.” The earth is filled with violence through them; and yet Jehovah is perpetually doing them good. He gives them rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with joy and gladness.

§ 4. We have hitherto chiefly drawn our proofs of the Divine goodness from the light of nature; we now turn more entirely to that of Divine revelation.

*Fifthly.*—Then, I observe, the goodness of God is strongly and repeatedly affirmed in the Holy Scriptures. “The Lord is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works.” “There is none good but one, that is, God.” “God,” says the apostle John, “is LOVE.”

§ 5. *Sixthly.*—The goodness of God appears in the law he has given to man. The amount of its requirement is love; and happiness is the result of obedience. The amount of its requirement is love; and as it was formed by him according to his own pleasure, it must be a perfect expression of that pleasure. Towards God, the love which the law enjoins is required to be supreme; towards other intelligent beings, sincere and universal. Now as he “has made love the only object of that law by which he governs his moral creatures, it must unquestionably be the object in which he supremely delights, and by necessary inference is his own moral character. This truth is the more strongly impressed, when we

remember that the law requires nothing else as excellent, praiseworthy, and rewardable. In all the various exercises of duty towards God, or towards our fellow-creatures, in whatever form they appear, or by whatever name they are called, there is no other real principle—or performance of duty—besides love. It is hence made the spring and directory of all our conduct towards friends and enemies, towards strangers and neighbours, towards those who can requite us and those who cannot. No being capable of happiness is above or beneath the reception of its benefits; and every mortal being is under immoveable obligations to exercise it. Thus it is made by the law of God the foundation and the sum of all good natural and moral,—of moral good, as being the amount of all our duties; and of natural good, as in this way the means of all our blessings.” Nor is our happiness promoted merely by the obedience which others render to the Divine law, ensuring as it does the discharge of their duties towards us, but immediately and directly by our own obedience. The certain and direct road to misery is the path of disobedience. The sum of the Divine law is love to God and man; and to say of any being that he loves God and the creature, in the degree in which they ought respectively to be loved, is only another manner of stating that he is in possession of perfect blessedness. Where these feelings are enthroned in the hearts of men, it is not too much to say that they enjoy a foretaste of the bliss of heaven.

§ 6. *Finally*.—The goodness of God is exhibited in the gift of his only begotten Son, to become a sacrifice for the sins of the guilty. And I state this as a display of the love rather than of the mercy and grace of God, because, strictly speaking, it was only a necessary preparatory step to the exercise of grace and

mercy, and is certainly to be traced to the principle of love,—understanding the term love in the sense of benevolence, or as denoting that tendency of the Divine nature which prompts him to do good, or to impart blessedness to others. And to this source or principle is it traced in the sacred Scriptures. “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” To no other source but love, *i. e.* pure unmingled benevolence, can it be ascribed. If indeed the law under whose curse the sinner had fallen—if that had been inequitable in its requirements—if it had exacted of the creature services beyond the compass of his physical powers—or if it had pronounced an unrighteously rigorous sentence—the deliverance of man would have been required by justice, and effected by the hand of justice. But the law was holy, and just, and good; it enjoined only what was right; it forbade only what was wrong; nor could it, with equity, have doomed those whose hearts are enmity against God to less than banishment from his presence and the glory of his power. Or if man, in his fallen state, had been an object on which the complacent regards of Jehovah might have rested, we might have ascribed his salvation to other feelings than those of mere goodness or benevolence. But this was not the case. On the contrary, he must have been an object, morally considered, of Divine abhorrence. It must have been love to him as a creature, or a desire to do good to him—yea, the highest good—a desire unprompted by any consideration of his worthiness, for he was a sinner, ungodly, without strength—that prompted Jehovah to give his only begotten Son, “that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” With regard to this display of Divine love, one of the

sacred writers uses the following rather remarkable language. "*In this* was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him."\* His meaning cannot be that there is no other manifestation of the love of God, but no other that will bear comparison with this. This was the grand—the giant proof, so to speak: all others, when placed by its side, dwindle into absolute insignificance.

§ 7. And there are several considerations which serve to exalt our conceptions of this display of Divine love. There is—

*First.*—The depravity and guilt of those on whose behalf this gift was bestowed upon the world; for as the prince of scholastic divines, the learned and admirable Turretine, says, it was imparted "*citra ullum creaturæ meritum, et non obstanti ejus demerito,*" [*i. e.* without any merit in the creature; and even his demerit did not set aside the bestowment.] In Scripture language, the love of God towards us was commended, or illustriously displayed, "in that, while we were sinners, Christ died for us." But—

*Secondly.*—The greatness of the gift enhances our conceptions of the goodness of the Giver; for it was the Son—the only begotten Son of the Father—who came into the world, "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." It was not one of the chief of his ministering spirits—not one of the highest order of seraphs, but a being so mysteriously united with the Father as to be one with him, on whom all the love of his heart was placed with an ardour of affection of which even the most tender and devoted attachments amongst men can give us but

\* 1 John iv. 9.

a very incompetent conception. And it was this consideration of the greatness of the gift to which our Lord himself refers us, as illustrative of the amazing extent of the Divine goodness. "God so loved the world." How? He so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son!

Nor should we, *Thirdly*, forget to take into our consideration, as illustrative of the love of God in the great work of human redemption, the purpose for which the Son of God was given, viz. to make atonement for human guilt by suffering the painful, and shameful, and accursed death of the cross. It is not sufficient merely to recollect the original and native riches of the Son of God—to remember that the brightness of the Father's glory came into this world for us,—we must bear it in mind that he became poor for us—that he was found in fashion as a man, yea "took upon him the form of a servant"—that he condescended to suffer hunger, and shame, and reproach—that he was wounded for our offences, and bruised for our iniquities—that he had to encounter the onset of devils, to meet the storm of Divine wrath, to bear the curse of a violated law, to pour out his soul unto death between two malefactors on the cross for us,—we must recollect, I say, that such was the purpose for which the Son of God was given; and remembering this, it cannot fail to enhance our conceptions of that love which prompted the gift.

*Finally*.—We should remember the multitude and the excellence of the benefits which flow to us in consequence of this gift; for "God gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish;" and he "hath redeemed us from the curse of the law," by him "in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sin." He "hath reconciled us to God by the death of the cross;" he has brought us who

were afar off nigh unto God, and made us "fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;" yea, exalted us to be "kings and priests unto God and his Father;" and inspired the hope of reigning in glory for ever and ever. Thus present happiness and future blessedness are secured to all believers by the gift of Christ; and this circumstance enhances our conceptions of that love which prompted it.

§ 8. The grand objection against the love of God, in addition to what have been already adverted to, is taken from the permission of moral evil. "Since Jehovah had power," says the objector, "to prevent the entrance of so dreadful a scourge as this, he cannot be a being of boundless goodness, or he would have done it." With our present necessarily imperfect knowledge of God, of his purposes, and the reasons of his conduct, it ought not to be esteemed wonderful if this subject should present a difficulty which we cannot now at least entirely obviate; yet something may be done to alleviate its pressure. That the Divine glory will ultimately be more effectually promoted by the permission of sin will not admit of a doubt. God is glorified when his character is displayed. Now some of the Divine perfections must ever have remained under a veil, and none of them would have shone with so bright and dazzling a lustre as they do at present, if almighty power had interfered to prevent the lapse of the creature. If every part of the moral creation had preserved their integrity, justice and grace must for ever have remained concealed from their view; and as to love, it must have been dim and lustreless indeed,—for it is from the sin and guilt of the creature that love takes its brightest tints, its warmest glow. Now this being the case, although the entrance of sin will occasion eternal misery to a part of

the race of man, it would, I apprehend, be hazardous to say that goodness should have stepped forwards to prevent it, even though the loss of some of the human race should be the source of no benefit to the world at large. It is of infinite importance that the character of Jehovah should be fully unfolded to the eyes of the universe. This is, I apprehend, a matter of far greater importance than the preservation of the finally lost even from eternal suffering. No doubt the final destruction of the wicked must be viewed as a loss and injury to the great system of being; but this loss is more than counterbalanced by the benefit which the system derives from the full development of the Divine character, for which the lapse of the creature, and for which only the lapse of the creature, could have afforded an opportunity. The great system of being at large derives more good from that display of the Divine perfections for which the entrance of sin made way, than it suffers injury from the loss of a part of its members, of which melancholy event it is the occasion and cause. In fact, it is difficult to see how a moral system could have been established at all, without a full development of the Divine character. There could not otherwise have been moral instruments, *i.e.* motives by which to govern the world, for the world is governed by motives; and what are those motives but the exhibited glories of the Divine justice and grace as they shine in the law and the gospel? What deters a sinner from the commission of sin? The terrors of Divine justice. What allures him to the love of God? The irresistibly attractive influence of Divine grace. These are the instruments of moral government—the powerful motives by which, when the heart is brought to feel the force by the influence of the spirit of God, so wonderful a revolution is produced in human character.



and conduct. Without a full development of the Divine character, there could not then have been a moral system established in the world; or if there had, it must have been a system—from the inadequacy of its motives to hate sin and love holiness—insufficient for the purposes of moral government. This must be avoided,—at every expense it must be avoided; and if it cannot be avoided but by the permission of the lapse, and consequently the loss of a part of the system itself, goodness requires, *i.e.* goodness to the whole requires—for goodness always considers the whole, and not a part of a moral system—that no act on the part of God should be put forth to prevent it. But our argument does not stop here. It has hitherto proceeded on the admission that the loss of a part of the system, in consequence of the permission of sin, will be of no benefit to the universe at large. Even if that were the case, still as greater good accrues to the whole system from the permission of the lapse of man than could have been secured by its prevention,—even in that case, I say—such being the undoubted fact—good is not violated by its permission. But who can say that the loss of a part of the system will be no benefit to the world at large? “It cannot be proved,” says Dwight, “that the existence of sin”—or, as I should rather say, the permission of sin—“will in the end be a detriment to the universe. Until we know what will be both the progress and the end, we certainly can never prove this proposition, because the means of proof lie beneath our reach. All moral beings are governed by motives only. What motives will upon the whole produce the greatest good, united with the least evil, to the intelligent kingdom, and how far the fall and punishment of some intelligent beings may, in the nature of the case, be indispensably

necessary to the preserving obedience of the great body, cannot be determined by us. But until this is done, and indeed many other things of great moment to the question, it can never be proved that the existence of moral evil is injurious to the universe, or the permission of it inconsistent with the most perfect good-will on the part of God." This statement in Dwight is in entire harmony with a sentiment which was expressed in a former lecture, and which from the importance of the subject I am induced to repeat. Perhaps throughout eternity the awful spectacle of the dreadful evils which disobedience brings upon all intelligent beings may be necessary—that is, as a moral means—for confirming even those who shall enter the heavenly mansions in their love to holiness, and in their determination to consecrate their expanded and celestial powers to the service and glory of God.

§ 9. It should never be forgotten, in our reflections and reasonings upon this awfully mysterious subject, that though the system at large derives great benefit from the lapse and the loss of a part of it, yet that this part is not *sacrificed* for the good of the whole, but only permitted—if I may so express myself—to *sacrifice* themselves. They were not doomed to misery without the existence of sin and guilt on their part; nor were they appointed to be sinners; nor was any influence on the part of God exerted to make them such, that others might receive benefit thereby. If that had been the case, the spectacle of their woe would have been of no moral use to the universe at large. The sight of undeserved suffering cannot operate as a motive against the commission of sin. But they were permitted to depart from God, *i.e.* no power was exerted to prevent them,—which they did voluntarily, being influenced by

nothing but the motives, which the tempter presented to their minds, and with which they cheerfully complied. They were left, in short, to take their choice,—warned of the danger of making a wrong choice, and with every motive for making a right one. They did make their choice. On what subject but this, will men complain that they are permitted to do as they choose? Was it unjust so to permit them? Could a moral system have been established without it? Was it unkind so to permit them? Whatever may be said with respect to the aspect the permission bears to them individually, yet—since the system at large derives more good than evil from it—since, after subtracting their loss, the universe is a gainer by it—yea, since the universe may be a gainer, as we have seen, by their loss—it is impossible to say that either wisdom or goodness should have interfered to prevent the entrance of sin. Yea, unless there be some radical fallacy in the principles we have just stated, it is impossible not to perceive that Jehovah, by preventing it, would have sacrificed the interest of the many for that of the few—the good of the great system of being for that of a small and inconsiderable part of it. I only throw out these hints, however, to lighten in some measure the pressure of what all of us feel to be a difficulty: for its complete elucidation we must wait till the light of eternity breaks in upon us.

## LECTURE XI.

---

### MORAL PERFECTIONS OF GOD—PATIENCE AND MERCY.

The scope of the terms, goodness, mercy, grace, and patience, reviewed:—  
patience:—proofs of, supplied, by the goodness of God, by the express  
declarations of Scripture, and by the conduct of God towards man-  
kind:—the design of Divine patience:—mercy of God:—proofs of,  
derived from testimony of Scripture, *mission* and *work* of Christ, the  
*apostolic appointment*, the *promise of pardon*, and its *actual enjoy-  
ment*:—the properties of Divine mercy.

§ 1. I HAVE more than once stated that the terms goodness, patience, mercy, and grace, when used to denote what are usually considered certain tendencies of the Divine mind, mean one and the same thing,—that there is not one attribute which is properly called patience, another which is rightly designated grace, and so on: but that these are several streams flowing from one common fountain—the glorious and inexhaustible and infinite fountain of Divine love; or, in other words, that the several terms of which we are now speaking merely denote the different states in which goodness finds its objects, and the different blessings it pours upon them. Goodness, when exercised towards the miserable, becomes mercy; when manifested in bearing with

the sins of the transgressor, it is denominated patience; and when employed in pardoning them, it is usually called grace. If there be any distinction between mercy and grace, it is that which has been stated. The former regards man as miserable—the latter as guilty. It is not necessary, however, to preserve this nice distinction in the use of these words: the Scriptures do not appear to do it. Mercy and grace are there used as if they were perfectly synonymous; and I am more disposed to imitate their example, in what I shall have to say with reference to them, from the consideration that the proof of the one necessarily involves that of the other,—as, if it can be shown that Jehovah is ready to dispense grace, no one can doubt of his willingness to show mercy.

But though it is a mistake to conceive of goodness and patience, and mercy and grace, as constituting so many separate attributes, it may be necessary, as I have stated, to institute a proof that love in all these various forms will be manifested by the great Eternal; since from the exercise of goodness to an innocent creature, or to a creature considered as a creature, without any reference to its moral state, it will by no means follow that the same goodness will be exercised towards a guilty creature. It is a far higher and more glorious act of love to pardon the transgressions of rebels than to supply the wants of the innocent, or even to relieve the distresses of the miserable. The greater secures the less, but the less does not certainly include the greater. If God be gracious, he must be good, using the terms now in the sense which is ordinarily attached to them; but it cannot be said, *vice versa*, that since he is good, he must necessarily be gracious. I proceed therefore to show that goodness, in all its different modifications of

patience and mercy, and grace and wisdom, may be truly ascribed to Jehovah.

§ 2. And blending together mercy and grace, for the reasons stated a short time ago, I begin with

#### PATIENCE,

because it is an inferior manifestation of love to that which is implied in the term grace. Patience is Divine goodness displayed in enduring the provocations of his sinful creatures, and in restraining the expression of his righteous displeasure against them. It is set before us in those words of the Pentateuch,—“The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth;” as well as in the language of the apostle, “Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering?”

§ 3. Proof of the Divine patience may be gathered, *in the First place*, from the statement which has been given of the goodness of God. For though to prove that Jehovah is good is one thing, and that he will exercise his goodness in a particular way is another, yet having shown that he possesses the attribute, and that his goodness—like all his other perfections—is infinite, we are clearly warranted in looking for the manifestation of it in every way which does not oppose his ultimate designs in calling into existence the intelligent part of his creation. That a being of boundless and infinite benevolence, even though we should grant him to be perfectly holy and inflexibly just, might be disposed to delay for a season the righteous inflictions of his vengeance, with a view to ascertain whether subsequent reflection would be followed by a favourable change in the character of the transgressor, seems a possible and a probable supposition. How far and how long he would bear with

them, reason is totally unable to say; nor indeed is she competent, when wholly unenlightened by experience and revelation, to decide certainly whether it would be compatible with the great purposes of his government to postpone, even for a definite period, the stroke of justice. All that unassisted reason can say is, that there is ground for hope that the goodness of the great Supreme will lead him to the exercise of patience.

*Secondly.*—Proof of the Divine patience is supplied us by many express declarations of Scripture. Jehovah is called the God of patience. We read of the riches of his forbearance and longsuffering. The longsuffering of God is salvation. His patience is his glory. For when Moses besought the Lord to show him his glory, it is said, “The Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.”

*Thirdly.*—The conduct of God towards mankind affords abundant and most convincing evidence that he is a God of patience. The question whether the goodness of the Deity will lead to the exercise of patience is manifestly a question of fact. When it is inquired, “Will the Divine Being bear with the provocations of his sinful creatures, and restrain for a season the expression of his righteous displeasure against them?” the inquiry may be answered by another, viz.—Has he done this? Does the history of the world, or the history of individuals, afford any indications of longsuffering goodness on the part of God? We all know that such indications are abundant, and everything but infinite. They are displayed in the history of the world, both before and after the flood. The union of the sons

of God with the daughters of men, or, in other words, of the church and the world, was speedily followed by the total corruption of the human race. "And God saw that every imagination of the thought of man's heart was only evil continually." Yet he suffered beings whose vices must have been of gigantic size to remain in the world for the amazing period of five hundred, seven hundred, and nearly a thousand years. And when it became at length necessary to purge the earth of this moral pestilence, yet for the space of one hundred and twenty years did the goodness of God hold back the waters of the deluge, impatient as though they were to roll onwards and sweep so foul a blot from the fair face of creation. Nor since the deluge, has the patience of God been less conspicuously displayed. How great have been the provocations to vengeance! "Fix your thoughts," says an excellent writer, "on one characteristic feature" of the depravity of the world—"on one with which all the rest have been intimately associated,—I mean its abominable idolatry. The Author of our being, the Former of our world, the God of our mercies, justly claims the love and homage of every heart he has created, and views with deepest indignation the transference of that homage to any competitor for his throne. Yet as early as the days of Job, who lived probably even before the time of Abraham, the worship of the East was transferred from the God of heaven to the luminaries which his hands had formed. The very ancestors of Abraham were themselves the worshippers of idols. Take, then, a rapid glance of the vile idolatries of our world, from that period to our own. Associate together in your own minds the Moloch, and the Baal, and the Dagon of Canaan, with the Mars, and the Venus, and the Bacchus of Greece—with the Vishnu, and the



Juggernaut, and the Kalee of India—with the horrid idols of the vast empire of China, and with the misshapen logs of the islanders of the South. Associate these in your minds with the thousands and tens of thousands of imaginary deities which have been, in other countries and in various ages, the objects of idolatrous adoration. Think of their disgusting forms and odious characters, of the abominable rites with which they have been worshipped, and of the scenes of oppression and extortion, of impurity and of blood, which the precincts of their temples have presented to the eye of man, and which the interior of those polluted structures have presented to the eye of Him who seeth in secret! Think of the continuance of this awful and unhallowed system, with different degrees of turpitude and grossness, from the days of Job and of Abraham to the present hour! And then form your conceptions of the patience of that God who has exercised forbearance and long-suffering under provocations such as these!”

But further, our own history as individuals supplies us with ample proof of the patience of God. To borrow the statements of the same writer,—“How many mercies, rich and tender, have left us ungrateful and insensible! How many impressions, and convictions, and resolutions have been allowed to vanish from our minds, without securing any practical effect! How many instructive and warning events, in the course of Providence, regarding ourselves, or our friends, or our country, have been suffered to pass away, without producing any salutary result! How many opportunities of doing good have we allowed to escape unimproved! How little of our time, or thought, or affection, or influence, or property, have been consecrated to the service of God! How often have religious advantages of the very highest

value, been ungratefully and criminally neglected! How many of our Sabbaths have yielded us, so far as we can ascertain, little if any benefit! How often has the word of God, whether read or preached, failed to produce upon our minds and hearts the impressions it is so admirably calculated to awaken! how often has its tendency been counteracted, by the indulgence of a spirit incompatible with any earnest desire to derive personal advantages from the ordinances of God and the means of grace! And are there not many, favoured with every external privilege, who have hitherto expended all the energy of their minds, and all the ardour of their feelings, on the concerns and the pleasures of the present life—who have never yet seriously considered the value of the immortal soul—who have never embraced, by faith, the salvation of the Son of God—who have never, in one single instance, presented at the throne of grace the prayer of an awakened conscience or the sacrifice of a broken heart—who are still under the guilt of sin and the curse of God? Oh, should not such reflect, with the deepest feelings of contrition, and alarm, and gratitude, on the patience and the forbearance which the Most High has so long continued to exercise!" And this patience, as it has been justly and admirably observed, has been exercised in connection with omniscience—to which the whole amount of this iniquity has been distinctly visible; with holiness, which has a heart to detect and abhor these abominations; and with omnipotence, which has a hand perfectly able to punish them.

§ 4. The design of Divine patience is—1. To afford opportunity for the birth and subsequent conversion to God of all the chosen to salvation, that so none of the elect may be finally lost. 2. To secure time and the

enjoyment of the means of repentance to all men. The goodness of God leadeth *i. e.* it is intended or adapted to lead to repentance. 3<sup>d</sup> To illustrate and display the justice of God in the future punishment of the ungodly. Had vengeance against transgressors been taken immediately after the first act of sin, it might have been alleged that the sovereign Ruler stretched justice to the very verge of severity; but now that by his long-suffering they are enabled to multiply their transgressions, to draw out iniquity to a long cord, and to sin as it were with a cast rope, it must be manifest to every one that the Judge of all the earth in pronouncing the sentence of banishment upon them does right.

§ 5. The mercy or grace of God, considered as an attribute or feeling of the Divine mind, is simple goodness prompting to the communication of various blessings upon the miserable and guilty of his creatures. Considered as to its results, it is the assistance, and relief, and pardon, and blessedness which spring from it; for the terms grace and mercy, still more frequently and unequivocally than the term goodness, are used to denote the principle or feeling of the Divine mind, and the varied blessings which flow from its exercise. I shall not treat of mercy and grace separately, for the reasons stated a little time ago; nor will it be necessary to dwell upon the general nature of either. It will be necessary, however, to adduce

#### PROOF OF THE GRACE AND MERCY OF GOD.

§ 6. For this proof we must resort to Divine revelation. I will not say, indeed, that the mass of evidence in support of the goodness of God which the light of nature supplies does not render it probable that pardon would be extended to the guilty, if it could be done

consistently with the claims of justice; for I have no doubt that this is the case. Granting the possibility of devising a way for the honourable extension of mercy to the transgressor, reason itself teaches that goodness will gratify its generous and noble nature by carrying the olive branch of peace to them. But the light of nature can go no further. It is unable even to decide whether a reconciliation of the apparently opposing claims of justice, truth, and mercy be practicable or not; and much less can it describe the way, in point of fact, in which righteousness and peace have been made to kiss each other. It is utterly incapable of informing us whether grace, if it can be exercised at all, will be manifested to the whole of the human race, or to a part merely; as well as on what terms it will be displayed to any. To the Scriptures then we make here our direct appeal, and by their light exclusively we must walk.

*First.*—Then, I observe, we have many express declarations in support of our faith in the grace or mercy of God. “Unto thee, O Lord,” says the Psalmist, “belongeth mercy.” The blessed God is declared to be rich in mercy towards all them that call upon him—to be plenteous in mercy—to delight in mercy. “With the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.” “Who is a God like unto our God, forgiving iniquity, and passing by transgression, because he delighteth in mercy?” “The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him.” “Come now, and let us reason together,” saith the Lord to sinners: “though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let

him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

. 2. The mission and sufferings and death of the Son of God proclaim the mercy and grace of God. We have seen that the gift of the Saviour sprang from the goodness or love of God, and that it was intended to make way for the exercise of his grace. If there could be any doubts on this point, the language of our Lord would be adapted to dispel it. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever"—or to the end that whosoever—"believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." To the same effect are the words of the apostle: "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." And again: "Whom God hath sent forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." Now since the gift of Christ can have resulted from no source but the love of God, and as this gift was imparted with the declared intention of making way for the display of his grace, or of removing those moral impediments to the bestowment of mercy upon the sinner which resulted from his character as the Governor of the universe, can we possibly doubt for a moment whether goodness in the form of grace will be exercised towards every penitent transgressor? Surely not. It is for man to propose an object to himself, and take measures to secure its accomplishment, and after all depart from his own purpose, but not for God. He never purposes what he does not undertake, nor undertakes what he does not accomplish.

3. The appointment of an order of men to announce to their fellow-creatures the intelligence of the decease which the Saviour accomplished at Jerusalem, and promise salvation to all who should believe in his name, proclaim that God is a God of mercy. "Go ye forth," was the language of Christ to the apostles, "into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." They were, however, enjoined to tarry at Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high; but after the promised effusion of the spirit, on the day of Pentecost, they applied themselves with ceaseless energy to the discharge of their mission. Wherever they went, they preached repentance and remission of sins in the name of Christ, affirming that he was exalted to the right hand of God to impart both, and that whosoever should believe on him would not perish, but have everlasting life. And though the primitive labourers have long since left the field of exertion, though the living voice of apostles and evangelists is no longer heard, yet, though dead, they still speak to us in their writings. The Lord gave pastors and teachers to his church, as well as extraordinary offices for the fitting of holy men for the work of the ministry; and having thus appointed for the regular publication of the gospel, he has promised to be with those who preach it to the end of time, doubtless to crown their labours with abundant success. Can it be supposed, after all these methods have been taken to carry the glad tidings of salvation to the children of men generally, that Jehovah is a God of mercy?

4. The direct promises of pardon which are made to sinners, on their faith and repentance, prove that Jehovah is a God of mercy. "Ho, every one that

thirsteth," says the prophet, "come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." "Come unto me," said our Lord, "all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" "and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." "The spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

5. The pardon, which has been actually bestowed upon many of our race, proves that God is a God of mercy. Whether he is so or not is evidently a question of fact, to be decided—as all other matters of fact are—by testimony and experience. If any indisputable instances can be adduced in which pardon has been bestowed upon transgressors, they must set the question concerning the mercy of God completely at rest. You will recollect, then, the publican who went up into the temple to pray, and when there beat upon his breast and said, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Nor can you have forgotten that it is recorded of him that he went down to his house justified rather than the other. Will it be said that this is a parable? I answer, be it so: yet even parables cannot be supposed to give an incorrect view of the Divine character; and this beyond all question exhibits his readiness to pardon the penitent transgressor. The account of the thief on the cross is not however a parable. It is *bonâ fide* history. That unhappy man, even after he was nailed to the cross, and his sufferings had commenced—for mere suffering will

not convert the heart to God—joined his fellow in reviling the Son of God. •No sooner, however, did the spirit of God touch his heart than he made the affecting appeal, “Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.” Nor was that appeal presented in vain. “This day,” replied our Lord, “shalt thou be with me in paradise.” You will recollect what Paul was before his conversion. “I was,” said he, “a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; because,” he adds, “I did it ignorantly in unbelief.” (For the first and the last clause of this verse should be read in connection with each other, the middle being thrown in as a parenthesis; the intention of the apostle being to show not why he obtained mercy, but why he had been a blasphemer, and so on.) “Yet though this has been the case, I obtained mercy,” he adds; and as if anticipating an objection which, as he saw, might possibly be urged that his was a peculiar case, and did not prove that God was willing to show mercy to others, he continues to say, “For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life eternal.”

GENERAL REMARKS CONCERNING THE GRACE OF GOD,  
INCLUDING SOME OF ITS PROPERTIES.

§ 7. *First.*—Divine grace, in so far as the creature is concerned, is entirely uncaused as to its exercise. We do not say that it has no cause for its existence and manifestation, but that that cause is not to be found in the beings towards whom it is exercised. Grace, as we have seen, is simple goodness to the creature,—goodness however manifested to him in certain circumstances, and these circumstances are such as to preclude the



supposition that the reason of its manifestation is to be found in him. For grace is favour exercised to the creature, without any merit on his part, to quicken it into 'existence and operation, but, as Turretine says, "notwithstanding his demerit;" or in the impressive language of holy writ, it is the manifestation of goodness to those who were without strength, ungodly sinners, enemies, and so on. It is, in short, the most wonderful exhibition of love to them that the world has ever heard of. It is, therefore, utterly impossible to trace its origin to them. The cause of the exercise of grace is the tendency of the Divine mind to do good, or to impart to others some portion of the blessedness which he himself enjoys, and thereby to promote his own glory.

*Secondly.*—Divine grace is manifested to the world through a medium highly honourable to God, and beneficial to the creature. The channel of its communication is the atonement of Christ. Grace is exercised on the ground, or for the sake of the infinite worthiness of the Lamb that was slain. Any expectations entertained by a guilty being that Divine goodness will be extended to him not built upon this foundation must be delusion and ruin. Under the government of a God of holiness, any direct merciful intercourse on the part of the sovereign Ruler with the guilty is impossible. Nor does this statement militate against the free and spontaneous exercise of grace. The atonement of the Saviour did not purchase the grace of God, but opened a way for its honourable exercise. It was not because there was any reluctance on the part of Jehovah to show mercy to the guilty that the Son of God suffered and bled upon the cross, but because their sins had raised an obstacle to its communication, which they could not—which nothing short of Divine power could have removed. The heart

of the ever blessed God longed, like the heart of David towards Absalom, to go forth in acts of kindness towards his rebellious children, but a regard to the honour of his law, and the stability of his government, which the purest goodness to his creatures would not permit him to sacrifice, prevented. He gave his Son to die that he might exercise grace to sinners. The atonement of Christ flowed from his goodness; it did not purchase his grace, and so cannot affect its free and spontaneous exercise.

*Thirdly.*—Divine grace is sovereign in its exercise. I mean that God has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardens, *i. e.* exerts upon them no power to conquer and subdue the hardness of their hearts. This important fact is established, beyond all question, by the circumstance that those who become in time the subjects of Divine grace were destined to that honour from eternity. Thus they were chosen to be the recipients of all the blessings which flow from the pardoning mercy of God, not only long before there was anything in them to attract towards them this love, for it was before they existed, but also in the order of nature previously to the foresight of anything spiritually good in them; for such a foresight can only rest upon the Divine determination to raise them to a state of moral excellence. Hence it is said that God “hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.”

*Fourthly.*—The grace of God is irreversible as to its communications. “The gifts and calling of God are without repentance.”\* Whom he loves, he loves to the end. To those who are in Christ Jesus, there is now no condemnation. “My sheep hear my voice, and I know

\* Rom. xi. 29.

them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.' \* "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." †

\* John x. 27, 28.

† Rom. viii. 35, 37-39.

## LECTURE XII.

---

### MORAL PERFECTIONS OF GOD—WISDOM.

Knowledge and wisdom, how distinguished, and how attributed to the Deity:—wisdom manifested in the adoption of good ends, and in the choice of means:—illustration, material universe, construction of the human body:—the vertebrae of the human neck, a display of wisdom:—animal joints:—the process of animal nutrition, a further illustration of:—the system of blood-vessels.

§ 1. "BETWEEN knowledge and wisdom, we are accustomed to make a distinction of importance. Knowledge may, in many instances, be merely speculative; wisdom terminates in action." Now though it is doubtless true that wisdom does terminate in action, yet the above statement conveys no accurate idea of the difference between knowledge and wisdom. By saying that knowledge may in some instances be merely speculative, it virtually states that in other instances it is practical, *i. e.* it terminates in action; and then what becomes, according to this statement, of the distinction between the two terms? Knowledge in all these instances is wisdom. Besides the statement fails to inform us why wisdom terminates in action, while knowledge rests in mere speculation. If this writer

had allowed his own statements to point to what they naturally do, he would have shed more light upon the subject; for he immediately adds, Wisdom supposes some end to be proposed, and some means to be selected for its attainment. It is, in short, the choice of the fittest means for the attainment of the noblest end. Is it not manifest, then, that wisdom is a compound attribute, if we may so speak?—that every act of wisdom supposes on the part of God the possession and exercise both of natural and moral excellence—of a perfect understanding to see what is best, and of a perfect disposition to do what is best? If the Infinite Spirit consisted of simple intellect merely, there would be nothing to prompt him to action; since what we call disposition is, and must be, in all beings the source of activity. Or, on the other hand, if Jehovah were ever so perfect, morally considered, but destitute of an infinite intelligence, he might act indeed, but not wisely; he would want in the latter case a perfect rule to guide his conduct, as in the former he must be destitute of a principle to rouse him from a state of everlasting repose and inactivity. With this statement agrees the language of Dwight, which I quote for the sake of placing this subject in as clear a light as possible. “The word wisdom,” he writes, “is applied indifferently to the character and the conduct of an intelligent being. As applied to the latter, it denotes the choice of good ends, and the selection and adoption of good means for the accomplishment of them. As applied to the former, it denotes that attribute which thus chooses, selects, and adopts. Wisdom therefore,” he adds, “is a compound attribute,” being made up of the knowledge to discern, and the disposition to choose the ends and means I have mentioned. The wisdom of God is formed, therefore, of

his omniscience and benevolence, united in planning and accomplishing all real good in the progress of his immense and eternal kingdom." If any exception at all is to be taken to this generally admirable statement, it would seem to lie against making benevolence the disposition with which omniscience is united in the production of wisdom; because that appears to shut out wisdom from all actions which do not flow directly from benevolence,—whereas wisdom may be equally displayed in the infliction of punishment. I am aware of the reply—that the infliction of punishment is an act of benevolence; and that it is so to the whole system I grant, but surely not to the individuals who fall under it, when final, at least. It is not therefore merely an act of benevolence; and therefore I should be rather disposed to define wisdom as the union of a perfect intellect to perceive what is best, and a perfect disposition to do what is best; because whether the term best refer to the communication of good or the infliction of evil, the definition equally applies.

§ 2. And since wisdom consists, or rather is manifested, in the choice of good ends, and the selection and adoption of good means for their accomplishment, it is evident that an inquiry concerning the wisdom of God must embrace the two questions,—“What is the end, or ends, which Jehovah has proposed to himself in those of his actions which lie open to our inspection?” and, “What are the means which he has adopted for the accomplishment of them?”

1. Then we inquire concerning the wisdom of God as manifested in the choice of good ends. Here wisdom may be violated; here folly may be, and indeed is displayed, by many of the intelligent creatures of God. Jehovah, however, has proposed the most important

ends to himself; for, his own glory, and the happiness of his creatures, in so far at least as the latter is compatible with the former, are the objects at which he aims in every part of his conduct. Does not wisdom shine in this appointment? Could objects more important in themselves, and more worthy of God, have been selected? No one will venture to reply in the affirmative; no one can even—I was going to say—think in the affirmative. The only way to disprove the wisdom of God, in the choice of the end at which he aims, is to show that his glory is not the ultimate end of his conduct, or, in other words, to overturn the Scriptures; for in the Bible it is expressly affirmed that for his pleasure all things are and were created. 2. Let us see how the wisdom of God appears in the choice of the means he has selected for the promotion of these ends. Wisdom shines in the adaptation of means to ends, and folly in their want of adaptation. Whatever measure of prudence and benevolence an individual may display in the choice of the object he sets himself to accomplish, yet if the measures he adopts to secure its accomplishment are ill concerted, or inefficient, or mistaken, we cannot ascribe to him the praise of wisdom after all. But God accomplishes the best ends by the best means. The proper proof of this assertion, and indeed the only legitimate and satisfactory proof, would be, you will immediately perceive, a copious induction of facts. The inquirer concerning the Divine wisdom, or the sceptic, should be conducted amidst the works of God, and bid to behold the manner in which he actually accomplishes the purposes he has in view, the admirable skill which is displayed in every part of his vast creation, and with regard to every object which he sets himself to accomplish. It is impossible for me to do this, however, in the limits which I must prescribe to myself. I can only

bring before your notice a few individual cases, in which the means which Jehovah adopts are admirably adapted to secure the end he has in view, and thereby to evince his wisdom. They shall be taken—

§ 3. FIRST.—*From the material universe.* And here I must not allow myself to expatiate, or I would direct you to contemplate the wisdom of God as it is displayed in the adoption and observance of general laws, by the instrumentality of which, or rather in conformity to which, his purposes are accomplished; for you are well aware that in the whole economy of nature this regard to general laws is most scrupulously observed. And the rigid observance of them by Jehovah lays the only foundation we have for certainty with reference to our calculations concerning future events; and supplies further a basis on which may be displayed incontrovertible proofs of Divine revelation, whenever Jehovah may be pleased to impart a supernatural communication of his will. Nor can I dwell upon the fitness of these general laws to promote the ends for which they were appointed; or I might call you to reflect upon the great law of attraction and gravitation, which binds together the various particles of which bodies are composed, governs the motions and revolutions of the planets, produces the ebbing and flowing of the tides, regulates the periodical return of the seasons, and secures the uninterrupted succession of day and night, so that the outgoings of the morning and the evening perpetually rejoice. Nor can I conduct you through the worlds of inanimate and irrational nature; but I will fix upon the construction of the human body, as exemplifying in its general conformation, and in its multiplied and admirable and minute contrivances an irresistible proof of the wisdom of its Creator. Wisdom shines, as we have said, in the adaptation of



means to ends; and in the human frame there is a plenitude of such contrivance to call forth our wonder and admiration. I speak now, you will observe, of course of direct and subordinate ends,—not of the ultimate object of Jehovah in the construction of the human frame, which was to manifest his glory; and that is promoted by the skill, and power, and goodness which are evinced in the admirable adaptation of innumerable parts of the human machine, to effect the immediate and direct object which the Creator had in view. The general conformation of the body displays the wisdom of God. Two great objects were to be secured—firmness and flexibility; the latter to render it capable of motion in a vast variety of forms, and the former to enable it to undergo all this motion without injury. The last object is secured by the bones and muscles of the body, and the former, by forming the skeleton of innumerable small bones rather than of a few large ones, and these are so joined together as to admit of the various parts and members of the body being moved in almost any direction. There is a sufficiency of bone and muscle all over the fabric to give firmness to it; while there are also sufficient divisions and joints to secure flexibility to it. Now it is especially in these divisions or joints, in the provision that is made to secure the required motion, and to guard against any disruption or derangement of parts in consequence of it, that the wisdom of the great Artist is so apparent. At any rate, here we recognize one proof of his transcendent skill. The construction of the bones of the fore arm, *i. e.* of the arm between the elbow and the wrist, may be first referred to in illustration of these remarks. Here, for the perfect use of the limb, two motions are wanted,—a motion of the elbow backward and forward, and a rotary motion, by which the palm of the hand, as occasion

requires, may be turned upwards. How is this managed? The fore arm, it is well known, consists of two bones, lying along side of each other, but touching only towards the ends. One, and only one, of these bones is joined to the cubit, or upper part of the arm, at the elbow; the other alone to the hand at the wrist. The first, by means, at the elbow, of a hinge joint, which allows only of motion in the same plane, swings backward and forward, carrying along with it the other bone, and the whole fore arm. In the mean time, as often as there is occasion to turn the palm upward, that other bone to which the hand is attached rolls upon the first, by the help of a groove or hollow near each end of one bone, to which is fitted a corresponding prominence in the other. If both bones had been joined to the cubit, or upper part of the elbow, or both to the hand at the wrist, the thing could not have been done. The first was to be at liberty at one end, and the second at the other; by which means the two actions may be performed together. The great bone which carries the fore arm may be swinging upon its hinge, at the elbow, at the very time that the lesser bone, which carries the hand, may be turning round it in the grooves. Thus provision is made for motion, while the bones are so firmly held together by ligatures that there is no want of firmness.

§ 4. The vertebræ of the human neck may also be referred to. "I challenge any man," says Paley, "to produce, in the joints and pivots of the most complicated or the most flexible machine that was ever contrived, a construction more artificial than that which is seen in the vertebræ of the human neck. Two things were to be done. The head was to have the power of bending forward and backward, as in the act of nodding, stooping, looking upward or downward; and at the

same time of turning itself round upon the body to a certain extent—the quadrant we will say, or rather perhaps, a hundred and twenty degrees of a circle. For these two purposes, two distinct contrivances are employed. First, the head rests immediately upon the uppermost of the vertebræ, and is united to it by a hinge joint; upon which joint the head plays freely forward and backward, as far either way as is necessary, or as the ligaments allow, which was the first thing required. But then the rotary motion is unprovided for. Therefore, secondly, to make the head capable of this, a further mechanism is introduced, not between the head and the uppermost bone of the neck, where the hinge joint is, but between that bone and the bone next underneath it. This second, or uppermost bone but one, has what anatomists call a process, viz. a projection, somewhat similar in size and shape to a tooth; which tooth, entering a corresponding hole or socket in the bone above it, forms a pivot or axle, upon which the upper bone, together with the head which it supports, turns freely in a circle, and as far in the circle as the attached muscles permit the head to turn. Thus are both motions perfect, without interfering with each other. When we nod the head, we use the hinge joint, which lies between the head and the first bone of the neck." When we turn the head round, we use the second joint of which we have now spoken, which runs between the first bone of the neck and the second. On another account, also, it was expedient that the motion of the head backwards and forwards should be performed upon the upper surface of the first vertebræ; for if the first vertebræ itself had bent forward, it would have brought the spinal marrow at the very beginning of its course upon the point of the tooth. But perhaps, with reference to the osteology of the

human frame, no bone exhibits so wonderful a display of the Creator's skill as the spine or back bone. Many difficult and almost inconsistent offices were to be executed by the same instrument. It needed to be firm and flexible, so as to allow of the bending of the body in all degrees of curvature. In addition to this, it was to serve as "a pipe or conduit for the safe conveyance from the brain of the most important fluid of the animal frame"—the spinal marrow,—a prolongation of the medullary substance of the brain,—“a substance not only of the first necessity to action, if not to life, but of a nature so delicate and tender, so susceptible and so impatient of injury, as that any unusual pressure upon it, or any considerable obstruction of its course, is followed by paralysis or death.” It was also to furnish a basis for the muscles, which are spread over the trunk of the body, and a support for the end of the ribs to rest upon. Now let us see how these objects are accomplished. It is composed of a great number of bones joined together by broad bases, which bones, by means of their processes and projections, are articulated, or dovetailed—as joiners say; so that no force which can be applied to the living subject, without extinguishing life, can separate them. Hence it is firm and flexible. The breadth of the bases upon which the parts severally rest, and the closeness and strength of the junction, give to the chain its firmness and stability; the number of parts, and consequent frequency of joints, its flexibility. To provide for the descent of the spinal marrow, each of these bones is bored through the middle, in such a manner as that when put together the hole in one bone falls into a line and corresponds with the holes in the two bones contiguous with it, at least while the body is erect. And to prevent the vertebræ shifting upon one another, so as to break the

line of the canal for the spinal marrow, when the body moves or twists, the articulation of the bones, to which I just now alluded, preserves the bodies or broad surfaces of them in almost the same relative position to each other, and throws the change and the pressure produced by flexion almost entirely upon the intervening cartilages, the springiness and yielding nature of whose substance admits of all the motion which is necessary to be performed upon them, without any chasm being produced by a separation of the parts; since, from the number of the vertebræ, the motion of each when the body bends is extremely small. Similar skill is displayed in rendering the spine a basis for the muscles and ribs; but I cannot enlarge.

§ 5. The wisdom of God is not less manifested in the joints by which most of the bones are terminated, and in the muscles by which they are tied together. But my limits will only allow me to make a few general remarks upon them. Of the joints, it may be said that they are adapted with exquisite skill to perform the motion of which they were designed to admit; that they are all tipped with gristle—of all substances the most proper for the place and purpose; while further, to diminish the effect of attrition in the greatest possible degree, they are lubricated with a regular supply of mucilage secreted by glands placed within the cavity of the joints themselves. With regard to the muscles, it deserves notice that there is an exact relation between the joint and the muscle which moves it. Whatever motion the joint, by its mechanical construction, is capable of performing, that motion the annexed muscles, by their position, are capable of producing. Either a different joint or a different muscle would have rendered both useless. This cannot be accident. Each muscle in the

human body is provided with an antagonist, as it is called, *i. e.* one to bend a joint, and another to straighten it again; and though they operate in every possible variety of direction, they interfere not with the action of one another.

§ 6. I wish not to dwell upon this part of the subject; but there are two sets of contrivances, if I may so speak, in the animal economy, which so clearly and strikingly exhibit the Divine wisdom, that I cannot refrain from laying a very short account of them before you.\* It is well known that nourishment is supplied to every part of the body, and only supplied by the circulation of the blood, which forms one reason, doubtless, amongst others, for the appointment of so elaborate and beautiful a process; and further, that the aliment we receive at the mouth only benefits the system by becoming mixed with the blood, to supply the waste which is occasioned by the various secretions which are constantly taking place in the human body, all of which are derived from the blood. It is manifest, therefore, that some provision must be made in the animal system, first, for the aliment getting into the blood; and, secondly, for the blood being distributed through all parts of the system. With respect to the first, the following is a brief, and of course an imperfect sketch of the method adopted by infinite wisdom. The food taken in at the mouth, and prepared by the action of the teeth and saliva for the subsequent change it is to undergo, descends into the stomach. Here it is acted upon both mechanically and chemically. The coats of the stomach break it by friction; the gastric juice, a chemical agent of most wonderful properties, dissolves it. Being by these actions reduced to a sort of pulpy substance, it is forced out of the stomach by the contraction of that bowel.

I say, forced out; for the orifice by which it escapes is in the upper part of the stomach, and higher up than the one by which the food enters into the first of the intestines: had it been in the bottom, the food would have passed through before it was sufficiently operated upon by the gastric juice. In this first bowel it is mixed with the bile, and becomes capable of yielding its essence, to which the name of chyle is given, a kind of milky substance. This chyle is the only part of our aliment which supplies nourishment to the system; and while the unnutritious portion of our food is forced through the bowels, by a wave-like contraction of the bowels propelling it forwards, and ultimately expelling it, the following admirable provision is made for the chyle to make its way to the blood, and become mixed with it. From every part of the intestines proceed capillary tubes, the mouths of which open into the bowels, but are so small as to be invisible, I believe, even under the highest magnifying power. Through these tubes, which are countless in number, the chyle, being drained from the pulpy substance which descended from the stomach, runs out from the intestines. The tubes, which are laid into the intestines, and which are so fine and slender as not to be visible, unless when distended with chyle, soon unite into larger branches. The pipes formed by this union terminate in glands, from which other pipes of still larger diameter, arising, carry the chyle from all parts into a common reservoir or receptacle. This receptacle is a bag of size enough to hold about two table-spoonfulls; and from this vessel a duct or main pipe proceeds upwards, climbing up the back part of the chest, and afterwards creeping along the gullet, till it reach the neck. Here it meets the river. Here it discharges itself into a large vein, which soon conveys

the chyle, flowing along with the old blood to the heart. How simple and beautiful this contrivance! An excellent writer remarks upon its perfections in several particulars. I lay the substance of his remarks before you. His first observation is upon the length of the intestines, through the whole extent of which the tubes of which I have spoken are laid. Being six times the length of the man, there is ample opportunity given, in the passage of the pulpy aliment received from the stomach through them, for the draining of every portion of chyle from it. Further, the peristaltic motion of the bowels, while it pushes forwards the grosser part of the aliment, squeezes the chyle from the whole mass. Further, the orifices of the tubes of which we have spoken, called lacteals, are too small to admit of anything creeping from the intestines, which would be large enough to disturb the circulation of the blood, even along the smallest of the arteries, which smallness is compensated by numbers. Further, the main pipe which carries the chyle from the reservoir to the blood, called the thoracic duct, being fixed in an almost upright position, is furnished with a succession of valves, opening upwards to prevent the return of the chyle when it has once passed through them, if its weight should prompt it to descend. Finally, though the chyle enters the blood at an odd, it is nevertheless a very convenient place, being near to the heart; for if it had entered it at an artery or distant vein, the fluid, composed of the old and the new materials, must have performed a considerable part of the circulation before it received that churning in the lungs which is probably necessary for the ultimate and perfect union of the old blood with the recent chyle. "Who could have dreamt of a communication," adds this author, "between the cavity of the intestines and the left great vein of the



neck? For my own part, I acknowledge, I am lost in wonder and admiration of the skill of the Creator."

§ 7. But after the chyle has become mingled with the blood, it is necessary that the whole mass should circulate through the body, to supply nourishment to every part of it; and to effect this important object, the most wonderful contrivance may be traced in the animal economy. Pipes or blood-vessels are laid from the centre of the system in all directions, and to its most distant extremities; so that not a single spot in the whole body is left necessarily destitute of the presence of this all-important agent. The blood, however, is not possessed of the faculty of self-motion. It will not flow without propulsion. Provision is made accordingly for this. The heart, a hollow substance, possesses the power of contraction, by which the blood is forcibly thrown out of the cavities within it, and forced along the arteries, until it reaches the very ends of the toes and the tips of the fingers. In its passage through the body, however, it contracts defilement of some kind or another, which renders it less able to nourish the system; and from this defilement it cannot be purged, without being brought into contact with the air. Buried in the midst of the system, and enclosed in the arteries, it can have no access to the air. In order to this, it must be brought back again to the heart, and propelled by it to the lungs, where it gives out the effete or corrupt air which it contained, and takes in the oxygen of the atmosphere, by which its sound and nutritive properties are restored. It must be then brought back again to the heart, to be by it sent forward a second time on its journey through the system. To effect this, a second system of blood-vessels is laid all over the frame, which, uniting at their extremities with the extremities of the

first system, collects the divided and subdivided streamlets, first by capillary ramifications into larger branches, secondly by these branches into trunks. And thus returns the blood—almost exactly inverting the order in which it went out—to the fountain from whence its motion proceeded; and when returned there, it finds mechanism adapted to force it on to the lungs, and to return it purified to the heart. Now there are two or three facts connected with this wonderful system which tend pre-eminently to exalt our conceptions of the wisdom of God. The first is the strength and position of the arteries. The blood, in going out from the heart, passing always from wider into narrower tubes, and in coming back (it goes out, you will recollect, by the arteries, and returns by the veins) from narrower into wider, it is evident that the impulse and pressure upon the sides of the blood-vessels will be much greater in one case than the other. Accordingly the arteries are formed with much tougher and stronger coats than the veins which bring it back. And since a wound in an artery is more dangerous than a wound in a vein, from the greater force with which the blood is urged along them, and the consequent greater difficulty of stopping the bleeding—not to say that arterial blood is better than venous—the arteries are defended by every advantage of situation that can be given them. They are buried in sinuses, or they creep along grooves made for them in the bones. Sometimes they proceed in channels protected by stout parapets on each side. At other times the arteries pass in canals wrought in the substance, and in the very middle of the substance, of the bone. All this care is wonderful, yet not more than the importance of the case requires.\*

\* *Fide* Paley's *Natural Theology*.

## LECTURE XIII.

### MORAL PERFECTIONS OF GOD—WISDOM.

Substance of preceding lecture; the structure and position of the arteries:—the duration and perfection of the system of circulation, a proof of wisdom:—God's providential government, a display of:—unwilling agents made to exhibit his wisdom:—*unlikely* means also:—the work of redemption, the discovery and execution of the plan, the method of bringing sinners to partake of its advantages, and the ultimate end, show forth the manifold wisdom of God:—lessons.

§ 1. IN my last lecture I endeavoured to show how strikingly the wisdom of God is manifested in the provision made for propelling the blood to the extremities of the body, and for securing its return to the heart and lungs, where it gives out its impurity, and is thereby fitted for a second journey through the system. I proposed to state a few facts connected with this wonderful system which tend pre-eminently to exalt our conceptions of the wisdom of God; and I began by noticing the structure and position of the arteries. They are fitted by the toughness of their texture to sustain the greater rush of the blood through them; and they are secured, as much as possible, from external injury by the depth at which they are buried in the system.

The second fact of this kind which I would wish you

to notice is the provision adopted by infinite wisdom to secure that the blood takes its right course through the system. It would immediately strike a person ignorant, that when by the contraction of the heart a considerable quantity of blood is thrown out of that *viscus*, there would be danger of its entering the veins, where it ought not to go, as well as the arteries, where it ought to go, to be by them sent forwards to the extremity of the system, since both arteries and veins open into the heart. And in like manner, when by the relaxation of the same fibres the heart is again dilated, that the blood would not only run into it from the veins, from whence, as you will recollect, it ought to come, but back from the arteries also, from whence it ought not to come, and through which it ought to be moving forwards towards the extremities. How is this mischief prevented? I answer, by the use of valves, which, like flood-gates, open a way for the stream of blood in one direction, and shut up the passage against it in another. There are in the heart receiving cavities and forcing cavities. The former take in the blood from the veins and lungs, and by their contraction send it into the latter, *viz.* the forcing cavities, to be by their contraction propelled through the system. To prevent then the return of the blood into the veins when the heart contracts, a valve is placed between the forcing and the receiving cavities, which shuts towards the latter, *i. e.* towards the veins, and so only leaves open the way to the arteries. While to prevent the backward course of the blood towards the heart, when that member dilates, a valve is placed at the mouth of each of the great arteries, which shuts against the heart, and only admits the blood to flow in a direction towards the extremities—the very direction it ought to take.

§ 2. Thirdly, consider how wonderful must that machinery be, which will continue in play for eighty or ninety years, and often remain perfect to the last! The heart contracts four thousand times every hour; and as each ventricle will contain at least an ounce of blood, it follows that there passes through the heart every hour four thousand ounces, or three hundred and fifty pounds of blood. Now the whole mass of blood is said to be about twenty-five pounds; so that a quantity of blood equal to the whole mass in the human body passes through the heart fourteen times in one hour, which is about once every four minutes. Well may it be said, what an affair this appears when we come to the larger animals! The aorta of a whale is larger in the bore than the main pipe of the water-works at London Bridge; and the water roaring in its passage through that pipe is inferior in impetus and velocity to the blood gushing from the whale's heart. Dr. Hunter tells us, giving an account of the dissection of a whale, "that the aorta measured a foot diameter. Ten or fifteen gallons of blood is thrown out of the heart at a stroke, with an immense velocity, through a tube of a foot diameter. The idea fills the mind with wonder." "The wisdom of the Creator," says Hamburgher, "is in nothing seen more gloriously than in the heart." And how well doth it execute its office! An anatomist, who understood the structure of the heart, might say beforehand that it would play; but he would expect, from the complexity of its mechanism, and the delicacy of many of its parts, that it would always be liable to derangement, or that it would soon work itself out. Yet shall this wonderful machine go night and day, for eighty years together, at the rate of one hundred thousand strokes every twenty-four hours, having at every stroke

a great resistance to overcome; and shall continue this action for this length of time without disorder, and without weariness."

§ 3. SECONDLY.—The wisdom of God is displayed by its providential government of the world. We must bear upon our minds the recollection that wisdom shines in the adaptation of means to an end. The end of God in the government of the world is, as it was in its creation, to promote his glory, *i. e.* to exhibit his character for the inspection and admiration of moral agents capable of appreciating it, that he may thus secure to himself that grateful affection and devoted obedience to which he has paramount and infinite claims. Now the dispensations of Divine providence will be found on examination to be, all of them, without a single exception, most admirably adapted to accomplish this object. Whatever Jehovah has done from the creation of the world to the present hour, or whatever he has permitted to be done, has issued in the manifestation of one or other of his manifold and adorable perfections; and even those events, which have seemed for a time to bring a cloud over the Divine character, have but served, in the end, to exhibit its glories in yet more glowing lustre. Thus the wisdom of God has been strikingly displayed in so ordering every event, which has taken place, whether He was the direct agent or not, and all the actions and all the words of his creatures, both of his friends and his enemies, as that, like radii of the same circle, they have all tended to one point, and have all contributed to the promotion of one object, and that object the greatest and most important which any being can propose to himself—the glory of him who is, and was, and is to come—the Almighty.

Now there are some considerations which serve to

enhance our conceptions of the wisdom of God in his providential government. Though he is the most important agent in the universe, he is not the only agent. There are others besides Him; and the main difficulty was to render the actions performed by them subservient to the promotion of his grand object in the government of the world. Those events which have come to pass through his immediate and direct agency, it was comparatively easy for an omniscient and omnipotent Being, so to order as to secure this result. But, since the liberty of accountable creatures must not be infringed upon, since it was necessary that they should be left to act freely to do what was good in their own eyes, the grand problem to be solved is, how—while the creature is left in the full and entire possession of liberty—it can be secured that, all the actions of such a creature should be made to tend towards one point, and promote the grand object of all providential government. Jehovah has had very unpromising materials to work upon, if I may so speak, yet every difficulty has been surmounted; and not a ray more of glory will be lost to the Moral Governor than if every event, in the whole extent of his vast kingdom, had been effected by his direct and immediate agency. In accordance then with the strain of these remarks, it may be observed that God has effected his purposes by very unlikely instruments, and very unlikely measures.

§ 4. *First.*—Jehovah in his providential government has rendered those beings who, as we should have supposed, were little able and less disposed to promote his glory, the instruments of its advancement. In casting our eyes over the intelligent creation, we fix upon the angels who kept their first estate; and from them we immediately admit that it is perfectly possible for the

great Eternal to derive a revenue of praise. They are too wise and too good, morally considered, to do anything which might tend to diminish the lustre of their Creator's glory. To them this object, loving Jehovah as they do with the most intense affection, must be infinitely dear; and by them it will be unweariedly and intelligently pursued. Descending into this world, we fix our eyes, again, upon good men as likely instruments for promoting the Divine glory. But even good men are not perfectly holy, like the angels. They may fail to advance this object from mistakes of judgment, or from obliquities of the heart. Their actions need oftentimes to be overruled, before Jehovah can from them derive any glory. And if such be the case with reference to them, how much more must it be so with reference to others? For this world is not the exclusive residence of the saints. The tares must grow up together with the wheat until the time of harvest. And how are tares to be made instrumental in promoting the Divine glory? What but infinite wisdom, in conjunction with omnipotent power, could cause men whose minds are enmity against God—who say, “Who is the Lord, that I should obey him?”—who would not move a joint to advance the honour of God, but, on the contrary, employ all the energies of their mind to degrade his character, and to subvert his government,—what but infinite wisdom, in conjunction with omnipotent power, could cause such men, in the exercise of perfect freedom, to take their station, while they mean it not, neither do their hearts think they do, by the side of Paul, and Peter, and John, as actual though unconscious instruments in promoting the Divine glory? But the universe contains even more unpromising instruments than ungodly men. There are fallen angels as well as fallen men—beings greatly



exalted above the human race in intelligence and power, possessed of an extent of malignity against the character and government of God, in union with subtilty and talents to display it with effect, of which we probably form but an inadequate conception. And in proportion to the difficulty involved in counteracting the machinations of such beings as these—in permitting them to act with perfect freedom, to lay their plans—plans formed with the express intention of robbing God of his glory—with all the skill and cunning which they can summon to their aid, and to set themselves to their accomplishment with all the energy of infernal malice; and then to turn all their councils into foolishness, to defeat their wisest schemes,—yea more, to render these very agents, so inveterately opposed to God and his cause, the instruments of advancing that cause, as really so—and perhaps we may add as much so—as if the agency had been exclusively God's;—to do all this, I say, requires most manifestly omnipotent power and infinite wisdom; while the accomplishment of it certainly proves that God possesses both. “It is,” says one, “a striking proof of the wisdom of God, that he uses the malice and enmity of the devil himself to bring about his own purposes, and makes the sworn enemy of his honour contribute to the illustrating of it against his will. This great crafts-master he took in his own net, and defeated the devil by the devil's malice, by turning the plans he had devised against man against himself. He used him as a tempter, to grapple with our Saviour in the wilderness, whereby to make him fit to succour us; and as the god of this world, to inspire the wicked Jews to crucify him, whereby to render him actually the Redeemer of the world, and so made him an ignorant instrument of that Divine glory he desired to ruin.

It is more skill to make a curious piece of workmanship with ill-conditioned tools than with instruments naturally fitted for the work. It is no such great wonder for a linnēr to draw an exact piece with a fit pencil and suitable colours, as to begin and perfect a suitable work with a straw and water—things improper for such a design. To make things serviceable contrary to their nature is wisdom peculiar to the Creator." Such is, however, the wisdom of the Creator. He might have chained up Satan, and thus frustrated all his wiles; but he has suffered him to run at large, and then improved all his contrivances for his own glorious and gracious purposes. "And the wisdom which this conduct of God displays," as the same author observes, "is more admirable and astonishing than if a man were able to rear a vast palace by fire, whose nature it is to consume combustible matter, not to erect a building."

§ 5. But I observe, *Secondly*, that God, in his providential government, has rendered unlikely means the instruments of accomplishing his purposes. I do not say, you will observe, that he selected such means when others better adapted to effect his intentions were, without infringing upon the freedom of his creatures, accessible; since on such an admission an argument might be reared against the very perfection we are now attempting to establish. But, I say, carrying on his purposes in the world through the instrumentality of moral agents, left—as it was necessary for them to be left—to the unrestrained influence of their own principles and passions, he has displayed his wisdom by bringing into a state of full and exact accomplishment the results he derived, by means which would have appeared to us very unlikely and unpromising; and which inferior wisdom could not have thus employed and improved. Still they were doubtless

the best, considering all circumstances, which presented themselves to the choice of Jehovah. He has effected his purposes,—First, by incompetent means. He has brought about great results through the medium and agency of events which seemed in themselves exceedingly trivial and unimportant, and upon which it would have appeared impossible that any very important consequences could depend, or be made to depend. And in this manner he has strikingly displayed his wisdom; for it is the very perfection of wisdom to accomplish great results by very feeble and incompetent instruments. When ample and splendid preparations are made, we expect ample and splendid results. Doubtless great wisdom may be required and developed here; but it cannot be equal to that which is manifested when the same results are secured without the same preparation, by means evidently less adequate to their production. Here there is not only a greater call for power, but for ingenuity, for greater skill and watchfulness to use these means, and to observe the time and manner in which we may most effectually work with them, so as to throw away not a single portion of the advantage to be derived from them. And in this manner God has oftentimes displayed his wisdom. The termination of the most bloody conflicts, the fate of nations, has sometimes turned upon a very insignificant and trivial circumstance; and Jehovah has effected his own purposes by seizing these events as they rise, displaying by this his wisdom in rendering inadequate means the instruments of effecting his own intentions.

But, secondly, God has effected his purposes, not merely by inadequate but by opposing agency,—by agency which is brought into operation by the ungodly passions of man, for instance; and so must be designed

to obstruct the advancement of his honour in the world. Thus he renders not only sinners, but sin itself, the means of establishing and of throwing additional glories around that throne which it aims to subvert. Who can deny to such a Being the perfection of wisdom? When the sons of Jacob sold their brother Joseph to the Midianites, they had no intention to put the purposes of God in a train of accomplishment. They were merely gratifying the unnatural and malignant passions which had taken possession of their bosoms. They meant it, we are expressly told, for evil; but God meant it for good. He employed their sin as his instrument for setting in motion the first link of that chain of events by which his chosen people were led into the house of bondage, to be prepared for a future residence into that land flowing with milk and honey—their destined possession. Herod and Pontius Pilate, together with the Jews and the people of Israel, were actuated by anything rather than a desire to advance the Divine glory in the world, when they lifted their traitorous hands against the life of the Lord of glory; yet so effectually were their ungodly passions rendered the instruments of accomplishing the Divine purposes, that they are said to have been gathered together to do what the hand and the council of God determined before to be done. Thus Jehovah displayed the perfection of his wisdom, by rendering one of the most unnatural and shocking crimes of which the world has ever been a witness the means of saving the church which it was designed to destroy. The persecutions by which the primitive Christians were assailed sprang from the enmity of the human heart against the things of God, stimulating its native cruelty to the most shocking ebullitions of rage; but God rode upon the whirlwind, and directed the storm. The furious blasts of persecution could not overturn the tree

of life; they served, under the guiding and controlling hand of God, but to cause it to strike its roots more deeply in the soil, and diffuse its fragrance and its fruit far and wide. "They that were scattered abroad," says the historian, "went everywhere preaching the word." Thus, as in the case of certain plants, the pollen of which is carried by the wind, and deposited in spots where it germinates, and to which it could not otherwise have obtained access, the tempest to which the first disciples were exposed bore on its wings the seed of the kingdom of God, scattered it far and wide, and converted many a desert into a fruitful field, which would otherwise in all probability have remained for years, if not ages, in all its primitive sterility, or, if covered at all, clothed only with thorns and briars. Thus has God displayed his wisdom, by making even the worst passions of men the instruments of accomplishing his purposes.

§ 6. THIRDLY.—The wisdom of God is pre-eminently displayed in everything that relates to the great work of human redemption. Hence it is called the *wisdom* as well as the power of God; inasmuch as his work, in the preparations which were made for it, in its actual accomplishment, in the measures adopted to secure the final accomplishment of all the objects for which it was undertaken, exhibits the most surprising display of Divine wisdom which the universe has ever witnessed,—the extent and perfection of which the most exalted intelligences are represented as ever eager to explore; which things the angels desire to look into. With reference to the great work of human redemption; there are two or three points which serve especially to illustrate the wisdom of God, to which I would beg your attention.

*First.*—Then, I observe, the wisdom of God shines in the discovery and execution of a plan by which the pardon

of transgressors might be rendered consistent with the claims of truth, and holiness, and justice. It is unnecessary to consume any portion of your time in proving that forgiveness cannot be exercised in violation of the claims of any one of the Divine attributes. Nothing but inveterate prejudice can refuse its assent to the proposition, that Jehovah can no more act in opposition to his own rectitude than to his benevolence. Contemplate then, for a moment, the moral position of matters between God and the sinner antecedently to, or rather irrespectively of, the death of Christ. Jehovah hates sin with an infinite hatred; and this is a state of mind of which it is as impossible for him to be divested as to be deprived of being. His law must be a transcript of his moral nature; it must exhibit his abhorrence of iniquity. It can in no other way manifest this than by an avowed determination to visit it with the punishment which it deserves. And such, in point of fact, is the Divine law. It is holy, just, and good. It displays the essential and perfect purity of the Divine character in its precepts and its sanctions. Man had broken this law. Having sunk into a rebel, and covered himself with the defilement of sin, the nature and the law of God stood in direct opposition to him. How could he pardon the transgressor without violating his own word, without breaking his own law, without acting in direct opposition to the essential purity of his nature? This was the high and difficult problem to be solved; and nothing short of infinite wisdom could have surmounted the difficulty. You know the method which Divine wisdom adopted. The Lord laid on the Son the iniquity of us all. He who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made "the righteousness which is of God by faith." And the curse of the law having been endured by our substitute, God can now be just, and the

justifier of him that believeth. Now it was necessary that this days-man—this mediator between God and man—should possess peculiar and apparently irreconcilable properties. He must be able to suffer; he must be of dignity sufficient to give moral weight and influence to his sufferings. And the wisdom of God is signally illustrated by the constitution of the Saviour's person. He became man, that he might be capable of dying; he was God, that his death might be able to atone for sin. But—

*Secondly.*—The wisdom of God is especially apparent in the method he has adopted for bringing sinners to the actual enjoyment of personal interest in Christ. Two things were to be done: viz., first, to exclude all ground of boasting on the part of the saved; for the main design of God, in the whole of his dealings with him as a sinner, is to lay low the pride of man, and thus to prepare him for entering upon an endless career of moral improvement. And this object is effected by making faith the medium of interest in the atonement of Christ. Had we been required to do anything, as for instance to love God or our neighbour, in order to our being united to Christ, and thus saved from wrath through him, it would not have wrought so effectually to hide pride from man. But since we become interested in Christ not by working but believing, by crediting the report that all that is necessary to reconcile sinners to God has been done by the Lord Jesus, how can we boast? "Therefore it is of faith," says the apostle, "that it might be by grace." But, secondly, it was necessary, not only that the method by which sinners became interested in Christ should be such as to exclude boasting, but such as to secure their sanctification, and their consequent meetness for heaven. We need no previous moral qualifications for the reception of justification, for the vilest of the vile are justified

on their receiving the record which God has given of his Son. But with respect to the blessings which flow to believers, as the consequence of justification, the case is materially different. To derive happiness from the presence of God, from the duties, the society, and indeed from any of the sources of unbounded and eternal delight which will be unfolded to the redeemed, in the temple above, it is of indispensable necessity that they be made holy, as God is holy. The moral nature of an intelligent being must be suited to the circumstances in which that being is placed, or happiness is out of the question. Now the wisdom of God is especially manifest in the method appointed for sinners to become interested in Christ; inasmuch as that truth, by the belief of which we are united to the Saviour, is also the means or instrument of our sanctification. We are said to be born again, "not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever;" and "of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures." "Sanctify them," prayed our Lord, "through thy truth: thy word is truth." Thus the blessings of justification and sanctification are, and must ever be, inseparably connected in Christian experience; and he whose sins are forgiven is rendered morally meet for the enjoyment of all the infinite blessings which flow from a state of acceptance in the Beloved. Can you conceive of a more delightful and illustrious display of Divine wisdom? Conceive of a number of individuals in prison, and hastening towards the tomb under the ravages of a jail fever. The sovereign proposes terms of amnesty. He offers them pardon on certain conditions. You are aware that the performance of these conditions, even if they were able and willing to perform them, would not



cure the malady under which they labour. Another process would be necessary for this. But it is not thus with reference to man, as a criminal before God. The very thing which is required of him by God, as the moral governor, in order to his enjoyment of the pardon, is also the means of his obtaining the cure which he needs; since it is the belief of the glad tidings that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, that reconciles the heart to God, and so prepares for the eternal enjoyment of himself. Thus the pardon and the cure of the gospel cannot be separated. Here is the antidote against antinomianism. No man can be pardoned without believing; and no one can believe without being sanctified. I have not said anything now, you will observe, with reference to Divine influence bringing us to believe,—that belongs to a different subject; but have merely dwelt upon the necessary effects of faith, when faith is implanted in the soul by the spirit of God.

*Thirdly.*—The wisdom of God is displayed, with reference to the work of redemption, in the method which he has adopted for securing the final accomplishment of the object for which it was undertaken. The gospel must be made known unto men, and provision also must be made for rendering it effectual to salvation. First: the gospel must be made known; “for how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent?”\* To secure this important object, the Lord Jesus—the head of the church—has been entrusted with the government of the world; for he is declared to be “the head over all things to the church.”† And in consequence of the office he sustains as the Lord of providence, he can so order and arrange

\* Rom. x. 14, 15.

† Ephes. i. 22.

the affairs both of nations and individuals as to send the gospel to whomsoever it is his sovereign pleasure to communicate it. Secondly: some method was to be adopted for rendering it effectual; for though diffused through the whole earth, it would not be embraced by a single individual, were all men left to the unrestrained influence of their depraved nature. To secure this object, therefore, the Holy Spirit was given to him, without measure, that he might pour him out in gracious influences on the children of men.

§ 7. If God be infinitely wise, we cannot but learn, *First*, that he is entitled to the entire confidence of our hearts. *Secondly*.—His perfect wisdom ought to lead us to seek it from him as its only source. *Thirdly*.—His infinite wisdom should encourage us to expect perpetual progress in wisdom in the world above.



[SECOND SERIES.]

DIVINE UNITY, AND THE REVEALED  
DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY.

VOL. I.



## LECTURE 1.

### THE UNITY OF GOD.

The discovery of, by unaided reason, doubtful:—the argument, *à priori*, of Dr. Samuel Clarke, inconclusive:—Dr. Doddridge's argument, in support of, deficient:—the only conclusive *à priori* argument:—the argument, *à posteriori*, of Dr. Dwight and others, unsound:—uniformity of plan in creation the grand proof, supplied by reason:—the objection, derived from man's limited acquaintance with the vast universe, answered:—the objection, from the existence of evil, answered:—unity of design, the amount of proof afforded by:—the doctrine, a fundamental truth of Divine revelation.

§ 1. THE unity of God is a subject the consideration of which comes naturally in immediate connection with a statement of the Divine attributes. "It is a doctrine in the highest degree agreeable to reason, when propounded and explained;" yet it admits of serious doubt whether the human mind could have attained to the knowledge of it without Divine revelation. "The general aspect of the heathen world," says Dr. Wardlaw, "seems decidedly to affirm the contrary; for polytheism, in one form or other, has been universally prevalent in the public profession and worship of mankind. And even with regard to the two or three individual philosophers who appear to have arrived at more rational views

on this important point, it may be observed, in the first place, that what they say consists more of shrewd conjecture than of anything like certain knowledge, and is, besides, mingled with much ignorance and much falsehood; and, secondly, that even with respect to those notions which approach nearest to the truth, it has been matter of question whether they might not have obtained them, directly or indirectly, from intercourse with that people to whom had been committed the oracles of God."\*

§ 2.\* Doubtful, however, though it may be whether the knowledge of the Divine Unity has ever been attained by the unassisted light of nature, it does not admit of a question that reason suggests many most powerful arguments in support of it. I proceed to adduce a few. The celebrated Dr. S. Clarke, to whose work on the Attributes I have frequently referred you, has given what he considers an *à priori* demonstration of this fundamental truth. His argument is as follows. "That absolute necessity, in which there can be no variation of any kind or degree, can never be the ground or reason of the existence of a number of beings, however similar and agreeing; because, without any other difference, even number is itself a manifest difformity or inequality of efficiency or causality. Jehovah exists by absolute necessity: he can be but one being." I confess I do not feel the entire force of this argument. I see clearly that a being who exists by necessity of nature must be possessed of certain attributes—such as are included plainly in the supposition of necessary existence; but it does not strike me, with the force of demonstration, that absolute necessity may not be the ground of the existence of two or more beings in all respects the

\* *Socinian Controversy*, p. 4, Second Edition.

same. It cannot be the cause of the existence of beings diverse from each other,—*this is demonstrably true*; but as far as I can see at present, *nothing further is*. He further argues, in support of the unity of God, in the following manner. “To suppose two or more different natures [*i. e.* distinct beings] existing of themselves, necessarily, and independent from each other, implies this plain contradiction,—that each of them being independent from the other, they may either of them be supposed to exist alone; so that it will be no contradiction to imagine the other not to exist, and consequently neither of them will be necessarily existing.”\* This statement he, in answer to an opponent, or rather an inquirer, thus further explains. “What exists necessarily, not only *must* so exist *alone* as to be independent of anything else, but (being self-sufficient) may also so exist *alone* as that everything else may *possibly* (or without any contradiction in the nature of things) be supposed not to exist at all; and consequently (since that which may possibly be supposed not to exist *at* all, is not *necessarily* existent) no other thing *can* be necessarily existent.”† Dr. Doddridge thinks that there is no force in this argument, the word *necessary* being used in different senses. In one part of the proof signifying what is hypothetically necessary to account for some phenomena, and in another part meaning underrived. Let A and B be supposed two self-sufficient beings, which must be the case if they exist by necessity of nature. In that case, as A is self-sufficient, he might exist without B, *i. e.* B does not necessarily exist. In like manner, B might exist without A; that is, A does not exist necessarily: so that the existence of neither is

\* *Being and Attributes of God*, Prop. VII.

† *Several Letters*, &c., First Letter.



necessary. This certainly seems plausible, to say the least of it. Still, however, it may be said, as Doddridge has said, that it only proves that they are not necessary to the existence of each other, and not that they are not underived; which is admitted, and indeed is involved in the supposition of their being both of them self-existent beings. Upon the whole, this demonstration of Clarke is far from rendering the matter self-evident; at any rate, I acknowledge it does not appear so to me.

§ 3. Dr. Doddridge argues, that to suppose another being equal with God is to limit the omnipotence of the latter, inasmuch as he would be unable to act without the consent of the former. "And if," adds this writer, "their volitions should in any respect contradict each other, which in things indifferent they might at least very possibly do, the one would be a restraint upon the other, and so neither would be omnipotent." It is obvious to remark, however, that the supposition of any—even the slightest—contradiction between two or more beings existing by necessity of nature, and who must accordingly be in all respects the same, is absurd. He further argues, that the supposition of such another being would derogate from the majesty of God, inasmuch as it would be impossible for him to conceal any of his councils or purposes from the knowledge of such a being. But if both beings were equal, both self-existent, it may be fairly questioned whether the mutual knowledge of each other's councils, &c. would derogate from the majesty of either.

§ 4. To me, I acknowledge, the only *à priori* argument in support of the doctrine of the Divine Unity is, that the supposition of more gods than one is altogether gratuitous and unnecessary. One omniscient and omnipotent being must be able to do as much as two or

a thousand of such beings. Why suppose, then, the existence of more than one? There is, we may be assured, no being existing in the universe in vain. We are driven by necessity to suppose that one self-existent being is to be found in the universe, in order to account for the existence of all other beings; but there is no necessity to suppose the existence of two. It is a manifest absurdity, in my view of the case, to bring more agents upon the stage than are required to account for phenomena, for the appearance of which we are constrained to resort to the supposition of any such agency.

§ 5. Turning from the *à priori* to the *à posteriori* argument, Dwight, Grove, and others have contended that, since we have no revelation of more gods than one, there can be but one God. That only one God is revealed to us by the works of nature is undoubted; but I suspect the soundness of the conclusion which they deduce from this circumstance. It rests on the assumption that, if there be more self-existent beings than one, they must all be the objects of human gratitude, reverence, love, and obedience; and therefore they must all be revealed. But does this follow? Our obligations to love and obey that great being who is revealed as our God arise out of the relations we sustain to him as our Creator, our Preserver, our bountiful Benefactor. If we sustain no relation to any other self-existent being, on the supposition that there is such a being, or if those relations are not revealed, we can be under no obligation, can owe no duty to that being. If a time were to come when he, on the supposition of the existence of such a being, were to make himself known to us, then would the relations we sustain to him, if any, become apparent, disclosing also the obligation under which we lie to him.

§ 6. The grand proof, however, as usually considered, derived from reason in support of the Divine Unity, is taken from the uniformity of plan which his works appear to exhibit.

So far as we are able to understand the works of creation and providence, we discern a general simplicity and harmony in the nature and operation of all things. Amid the immense complication which surrounds us, we perceive one set of laws, in accordance with which all things proceed in their course. The same causes produce uniformly the same effects, in every place and period. Vegetables spring from the same seed, germinate by the same means, assume the same form, sustain the same qualities, exist through the same duration, and come to the same end. Animals also are born in one manner, exhibit the same life, powers, and tendencies. Man has one origin, form, life, system of faculties, character, and termination. All things in this world are, in one regular manner, made subservient to his use and happiness, and are plainly fitted by one design, and conducted by one agency to this end. Day and night uniformly return by a single power, and with exact regularity. With the same regularity and simplicity the seasons pursue their circuit. The sun shines, illuminates, warms, and moves the planets by a single law, and with exact uniformity. By one law the planets keep their orbits, and perform their revolutions. The face of the heavens is but one; and the oldest sphere which is known presents to our view the same constellations which we now behold in the nightly firmament. "We never get amongst such original," says Dr. Paley, "or totally different modes of existence, as to indicate that we are come into the province of a different creator, or under the direction of a different will."

§ 7. To this statement it has been objected, that we cannot be sure that unity of design is preserved, because we know not the whole system. The obvious reply is, that the unity of God stands in that respect on the same footing with his wisdom, which can only be proved from a comprehensive view of the whole scheme, and must be left an uncertain thing, by all created understandings, if the reasoning in the objection be admitted. It may be replied again, that we must reason by analogy in this case, as well as in many others. "Finding," says Dr. Wardlaw, "the clearest and most astonishing indications of wisdom and skill in all the productions of nature that come within our observation, we infer, that the same skill and wisdom would be found to pervade, and to characterize, those parts of the universe that are beyond the range of our actual knowledge. On the same reasonable principle of inference, we conclude, that harmony of plan exists throughout the material universe, from the marks of such unity in that portion of it which the sphere of our observation embraces. The inference is, in both cases, greatly strengthened by the fact, that uniformly, in proportion as the inventive ingenuity of man has extended the range of his acquaintance with nature, the marks of design on the one hand, and the harmony of design on the other, have been found progressively to multiply." "But although the evidence is, in both cases, satisfactory, it is not," as he justly observes, "in both equally obvious."\* The marks of design are discernible in each of the individual objects that come within the reach of our observation; and every separate instance is a conclusive proof of the existence and operation of a designing cause. "Unity of design, on the contrary, must be discovered,

\* *Socinian Controversy*, p. 8, Second Edition.

not in each of the parts, considered separately, but in the system of nature as a connected whole—in the harmonious relation of the parts to one another, and their joint influence in the production of a common effect.”

§ 8. To the argument from unity of design it has been further objected, that we are not merely unable to affirm that it is preserved throughout the universe, but that the prevalence or mixture of good and evil would seem to prove that it is not. Accordingly, we find that it has actually given rise to the opinion that more than the agency of one being may be recognised in the universe. The ancient sect of the Manichees\* believed in the existence of two distinct eternal beings: the one *good*, supremely happy in himself, and the author of all the happiness that exists amongst creatures; the other *evil*, in himself unhappy, and, from the malignity of his nature, the cause of all misery. The variety of good and evil deities, also, which is to be found in the mythology of every heathen nation, indicates the general prevalence of similar sentiments. To evince the groundlessness of this objection would lead us into a discussion, with reference to the origin of evil, upon which it is now impossible to enter. I can do no more at present than meet the objection with the assertion, that the evil which has entered the system will be an ultimate benefit to the system at large; so that there is no necessity to suppose that it was introduced by a malevolent God,—a benevolent Deity may have permitted it to enter, perceiving that he could overrule it for good.

§ 9. We may then, I think, take it for granted that

\* [The founder of this sect was Manes, a Persian. He flourished in the third century. Mosheim's account of him and his system, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, is the most accessible to the general reader.—See Cent. III., chap. v.]

there is unity of design or plan in the universe. The only question is—"Does this unity of design decidedly prove that there exists only one designer?" "Certainly not," replies Dr. Wardlaw, joining issue with Paley, who expressly declares that the whole of this argument for the Divine Unity goes no further than, to an unity of council. There may, however, be unity of council among many designers. And if there were two or more self-existent beings, there must, as we have seen, be unity of council amongst them; so that uniformity of plan in the universe cannot certainly disprove the existence of two or more beings who cannot, in the nature of things, existing as they are supposed to do by necessity of nature, be in the slightest degree diverse from each other. Yet this uniformity of plan, taken in connection with the fact that only one God is revealed to us, and with the self-evident truth that one self-existent being is adequate to the accomplishment of all that could be done by a thousand of such beings, precludes, I apprehend, all rational doubt of the Divine Unity.

§ 10. I now pass on to show that the doctrine of the Divine Unity forms, beyond all question, one of the first and fundamental truths of Divine revelation. It pervades the whole, as has been justly observed, as one of those great leading principles to which it owes the peculiarity of its general complexion, and to which all the subordinate parts of the system bear a constant reference. The design of God in calling Abraham from his father's house, and in afterwards building up the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles, was to preserve the world from being entirely overspread with the contagion of idolatry, and the knowledge of the one only living and true God from becoming utterly extinct. There are numerous and pointed assertions of

the Divine Unity. "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord." (Deut. vi. 4.) And again: "Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the Lord he is God; there is none else beside him." (Deut. iv. 35.) In the same connection also we read, "Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the Lord he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else." (Deut. iv. 39.) In the prophecies of Isaiah we read, "Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God." (Isaiah xlv. 6.) "We know," says the apostle Paul, "that there is none other God but one." (1 Cor. viii. 4.) Again, in his epistle to Timothy, he says, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." (1 Tim. ii. 5.) In writing to the Thessalonians, he applies the epithet "living and true God" to the Divine Being—"Ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God." (1 Thess. i. 9.) And the prophet Jeremiah says, "The Lord is the true God, he is the living God." (Jer. x. 10.) "He is the living God," *i. e.* he hath life in himself, and he alone. He giveth life to all things. He is the fountain and origin of life to all the animated part of the creation: he is the true God, as distinguished from the vain idols of the Gentiles. It is life eternal to know him, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.

This view of the unity of God must not be so understood as to oppose the important doctrine that there are three persons in the one undivided essence. The consistency of the two statements, as well as the explanation and proof of the latter, must be left for a future lecture.

## LECTURE II.

### THE TRINITY.

This doctrine, the basis of the plan of redemption:—explanation of the doctrine, and extent of our knowledge:—Dr. Pye Smith's views:—Dr. Jamieson's:—further statements in illustration of orthodox views:—Post-Nicene Fathers:—Sabellianism, and its fundamental error:—Arianism and the Council of Nice:—ecclesiastical terms, meaning and application of, as adopted by the Arians and Sabellians.

§ 1. AT the conclusion of the last lecture, it was stated that the declarations of Scripture in support of the Divine Unity must not be so understood as to preclude all idea of plurality with reference to the great Eternal; because the very same volume which affirms that, in one sense, God is one, declares that, in another sense, he is more than one,—that, in short, there are three that bear record in heaven, (I do not quote these words in *proof*, but in illustration of the sentiment,) the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and these three are one. *The doctrine of the Trinity, or, as the word imports, of three distinct subsistences or persons in the one undivided nature or essence, lies at the foundation of the entire economy of our salvation.* “It pervades the whole of Divine revelation, and especially the New Testament.



The Father is always represented as sustaining the majesty of the Godhead,—as the great Moral Governor of the world, giving laws to his creatures, enforced by the sanctions of the rewards and punishments of a future state. The Son, or the Word, is represented as becoming incarnate, to accomplish the purposes of the Father's love in the redemption of the guilty. And the Holy Spirit, as the efficient agent carrying into effect the purposes of the Father, and the grace of the Son, upon the hearts of all the chosen to salvation." It is manifest that a doctrine of this kind, which is thus interwoven with every part of Divine truth, and constitutes the *very basis of that wonderful scheme of mercy on which REST ALL our hopes of salvation, deserves the most careful examination.*

I shall endeavour, in the first place, to give a statement of the doctrine itself, in so far as it comes within the range of human comprehension; and, secondly, to show the impregnable basis on which it rests.

§ 2. FIRST.—Then I proceed to explain the doctrine of the Trinity; or rather, to give you a statement of the amount of what is known upon this important subject. This indeed may be comprised in a few words. On examining the Bible—the source of all our information upon this mysterious subject,—amidst proofs that the Lord our God is one Lord,—we find three agents mentioned, to all of whom personal properties are ascribed, and of all of whom it is affirmed that they are God. How can these statements be reconciled with each other? How can one be three, and three one? Is not this a manifest contradiction? Such is the charge which the enemies of the doctrine bring against it; but with how little reason will appear, when it is recollected—

*In the First place*,—that we do not affirm them to be three and one in the *same* sense. To do this would truly expose us to the charge of believing a contradiction in express terms,—a contradiction so palpable and so monstrous that I am ready at once to admit no evidence can entitle it to belief. This we do not accordingly affirm; and to state that they are three and one in different senses involves no contradiction.

*Secondly*,—that we do not pretend to explain the precise manner or mode either of *their unity* or *their plurality*. Our knowledge on this subject is, indeed, rather negative than positive. We are, perhaps, better able to say what is *not* true than what *is* so. All that the Scriptures reveal upon the subject, and consequently all that we are required to believe—or in fact can believe; for when faith goes beyond Divine revelation, it ceases to be faith, and sinks into unprofitable, if not unhallowed conjecture;—all that the Scriptures reveal upon the subject is, that in the infinite but unknown essence of God there is a plurality, not indeed of separate beings, but of hypostases, subsistences, persons, or—since many wise and good men deem it safest and most becoming to use no specific term for this ineffable subject—of distinctions; and yet that these distinctions are not of such a nature as to destroy the unity of the Divine essence. We pretend not to explain what these distinctions are, nor what is the precise nature of the unity which we ascribe to the Godhead. We think that Sabellianism, which contends that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are merely economical terms, exhibiting the same being or person in different aspects, or as sustaining different characters, does not amount to the Scripture doctrine with reference to the statements of that plurality which it attributes to the Divine Being,—that

something beyond this, something more analogous to personality in the ordinary sense of the term, though by no means precisely what we understand by that term, is included in these statements; though what that something is we are totally unable to explain. And, on the other hand, we think that that unity which we ascribe to the Divine Being is more than the participation of three distinct individuals in the same common nature; for if this were all that is included in the unity of the Godhead, it would be manifestly impossible to escape the charge of tritheism,—the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost being as clearly three gods as three distinct persons of the male sex are three men. And yet what the precise nature of this unity is we are unable to explain. And this led me to say, a short time ago, that our knowledge on this ineffable subject is rather negative than positive,—that we are, perhaps, better able to state what is *not* true than what *is* so. In short, while we think that there are three distinct subsistences in the Godhead, each participating in the Divine nature, so as to be truly and properly God, we believe that these subsistences are so united as that they constitute not three gods, but one God. We believe that the great Eternal is three, in some unexplained and incomprehensible sense; and that he is one, in a similar inexplicable manner. And while we adhere to this statement, it will be found impossible to charge us justly with believing a contradiction. “I question,” says Dr. Wardlaw, “whether anything that is above reason can ever be shown to be contrary to it. For unless we have some notion of the thing itself, on what principle can we possibly make out the contrariety? Were we to say that the persons of the Godhead are one and three in the same sense, we should evidently affirm what is contrary to reason; be-

cause such a proposition would evidently involve, in the very terms of it, an irreconcilable contradiction: but so long as we do not pretend to know, or to say, how they are one, and how they are three,—to prove that we assert what is contrary to reason when we affirm that they are both, is, from the very nature of the thing, impossible. For what is it that is to be proved contrary to reason? Upon the supposition made, we cannot tell; it is something which we do not know, of the nature and circumstances of which we are left in total ignorance. The truth is we are lost, completely lost, whenever we begin, in any view of it whatever, to think about the Divine essence. We can form no more distinct conception of a being who never began to exist, or of a being that is everywhere present, and yet is wholly nowhere, than we can of one essence in which there are, and have been from eternity, three distinct subsistences.”\*

§ 3. In support of the statements I have given you, with reference to our ignorance of the exact meaning of the terms unity and personality when applied to the Godhead, and of the consequent absurdity of attempting to prove that the doctrine of the Trinity—a doctrine which it is not attempted to explain fully—involves in it an evident contradiction,—I beg to quote the following passages from Dr. Pye Smith’s work on the Messiah,—“We cannot reasonably doubt of the unity of God, in every sense in which unity is a perfection; but to the exact determination of that sense we are not competent. A manifest unity of intelligence, design, and active power, does not warrant the inference that unity, in all respects, without modification, is to be attributed to the Deity. For anything that we know, or are entitled to presume, there may be a sense of the term unity which implies

\* *Socinian Controversy*, p. 23, Second Edition.

restriction, and would be incompatible with the possession of ALL possible perfection.”\* And with reference to the statement that in the Divine essence there may be three subsistences, he says, “For anything that we know, or have a right to assume, the combination of Unity and Plurality may be one of the *unique* properties of the Divine essence—a necessary part of that SOLE perfection which must include every real, every possible excellence,—a circumstance peculiar to the Deity, and distinguishing the mode of his existence from that of the existence of all dependent beings.”† And he afterwards adds, in reply to the charges of tritheism and mystery which have been brought against this doctrine,—“Can any person be so dull as not to perceive, or so disingenuous as not to acknowledge, the difference between the belief of *three Gods*, and the sentiment that the Deity, strenuously maintained to be one being, should, as one of the peculiarities of his transcendent greatness and excellence, possess a threefold manner of existence? Or can it be rationally regarded as any just objection to such a sentiment, that human conception and language are confessedly inadequate to comprehend or to describe it?”‡

§ 4. Perhaps the doctrine of the orthodox, and of Scripture upon this subject, is as well stated by Dr.

\* [*The Scripture Testimony*, vol i., pp. 9, 10, Third Edition; vol. i., pp. 6, 7, Fourth Edition. Through the generous politeness of the learned Author, in presenting me with a copy of the last edition of this invaluable work, I am enabled to refer the reader to the exact pages as well as phraseology of both Editions—the Third and the Fourth. As the former edition is doubtless in the hands of many, and the latter will be procured by future purchasers, I feel this double reference to be, on these accounts, justifiable, if not demanded.—ED.]

† *Ibid.*, p. 12; Fourth Edition, p. 8, in which, for the term “circumstance,” the word “property” is substituted.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 15; Fourth Edition, p. 10.

Jamieson as by most writers. The persons of the God-head are one, as to "absolute identity of nature and perfections; but many, with respect to the individual and common possession of what is essentially one." And again: "As the Divine nature is so infinitely above the human; although three among men should be in no sense one, it would by no means prove that this cannot be true of God. Therefore, even that sense, in which we have shown that three persons may be one, with respect to man" [*i. e.* as possessed of the same nature] "falls infinitely short of expressing the unity of the Divine nature. For although all the individuals of the human race have one nature, and are originally of one substance, yet the union is not so close that the actions of one individual are common to all, which, with respect to external actions, is asserted of the Divine nature. Besides, created persons are not only distinct from each other, as to personality, so that one is not another; but separate, so that one exists without another. But the Divine persons, although distinct, are not separate; because one is in another. The Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father." (John xiv. 10.)\*

§ 5. The subject is of such consequence, and it is so important to see precisely the boundaries of our knowledge upon this fundamental point of our holy religion, that I shall, without scruple, give you the following statement of a modern writer upon the Trinity. "The Scriptures, while they declare the fundamental truth of natural religion, that God is one, reveal two persons, each of whom, with the Father, we are led to consider as God, and ascribe to all the three distinct personal properties. It is impossible that the three can be one in

\* *Vindication of the Doctrine of Scripture and of the Primitive Faith concerning the Deity of Christ*, book iv., chap. iv.

the same sense in which they are three; and therefore it follows, by necessary inference, that the unity of God is not an unity of persons; but it does not follow that it may not be an unity of a more intimate kind than any which we behold. An unity of consent and will merely neither corresponds to the conclusions of reason, nor is it by any means adequate to a great part of the language of Scripture, for both concur in leading us to suppose an unity of nature." He afterwards adds, "We are incapable of perceiving the manner in which the three persons partake of the same Divine nature. But we are very shallow philosophers indeed, if we consider this as any reason for believing that they do not partake of it; for we are by much too ignorant of the manner of the Divine existence, to be warranted to say that the distinction of persons is an infringement of the Divine unity." "It is strange boldness in men," says Bishop Stillingfleet, "to talk of contradictions in things above their reach. Hath not God revealed to us that he created all things? and is it not reasonable for us to believe this, unless we are able to comprehend the manner of doing it? Hath not God plainly revealed that there shall be a resurrection of the dead? and must we think it unreasonable to believe this, unless we are able to comprehend all the changes in the particles of matter from the creation to the general resurrection? If nothing is to be believed but what may be comprehended, the very being of God must be rejected, and all his unsearchable perfections. If we believe the attributes of God to be infinite, how can we comprehend them? We are strangely puzzled in plain, ordinary, finite things; but it is madness to pretend to comprehend what is infinite; and yet, if the perfections of God be not infinite, they cannot belong to him. Let those

who presume to say that there is a contradiction in the Trinity try their imaginations about God's eternity, not merely how he should be from himself, but how God should co-exist with all the differences of time, and yet there be no succession in his own being; and they will perhaps concur with me in thinking that there is no greater difficulty in the conception of the Trinity than there is of eternity. For three to be one is a contradiction in numbers; but whether an infinite nature can communicate itself to three different substances, without such a division as is among created beings, must not be determined by bare numbers, but by the absolute perfections of the Divine nature, which must be owned to be above our comprehension."\*

§ 6. You will perceive, from what has been said, that I utterly disapprove of those unhallowed speculations upon this ineffable subject, which however have too frequently prevailed, both in ancient and modern times. I scarcely know whether I should allude to them at all, were it not that a course of Theological Lectures seems to require that some information upon this point should be given; while the statements themselves may serve to render us more familiar with the doctrine of Scripture upon this subject, and to impress it more powerfully upon our minds. There can be little doubt that most of the Post-Nicene Fathers held the orthodox doctrine concerning the Trinity. They speak of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost as distinct persons in the philosophical sense of the term, and as the object of the worship of Christians. "Most of the oldest of the Post-Nicene

\* ["—— above our comprehension" as to the very UNITY of the Divine nature,—a subject which many imagine, or take for granted, they understand. *Vide Stuart's Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, Excursus I.* Of this Excursus Dr. Payne used to speak in high terms of approval, as at once most able and judicious.—ED.]



Fathers," we are told, "carried their notions of distinct personality and supreme divinity to a very great height; so that they were in danger of subverting the unity of God;" appearing to imagine that they sufficiently supported the unity of the Godhead by asserting that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost had each of them the same *divine*, as three or more men have each of them the human nature,—a sentiment which I think dangerous. The three persons in the Godhead are not one merely because they participate in the Divine nature, but because, participating it in some incomprehensible manner, they are united in a way of which we can form, and pretend not to form any conception.

Previous however to this celebrated Council, several errors had sprung up in the church; to two of which only, as being the more prominent, I shall call your attention. They are Sabellianism and Arianism, upon which modern Socinianism is an improvement, or rather a more bold and daring attack upon Divine revelation, though it must be confessed to be a more self-consistent system of error.

§ 7. The groundwork of Sabellianism was laid in the second century, by Praxeas.\* The next important labourer in the same field was Noctus;† and after him

\* [Of Praxeas's personal history we have little or no information. It has been supposed, from a passage in Tertullian, his great opponent, that he was a native of Asia. Waddington calls him "a writer of the Grecian school;" but Lardner thinks, from the "little notice of him by Greek writers, and the frequent mention of him in Latin authors," that he was "a Latin rather than a Greek or Asiatic." He made his appearance at Rome while Victor was bishop, between the years A.D. 192 and 207. Compare *Lardner*, vol. viii., 8vo. Edition; *Mosheim*, Cent. II., v. chap., xx. xxi.; with an Article in the *Biblical Repository*, vol. v., pp. 339–353.—Ed.]

† [Noctus, a native of Smyrna, was "an obscure man, and of mean abilities."—*Mosheim*. He flourished, according to Lardner, about the year 220.]

arose Sabellius,\* about the middle of the third century, by whose name the system was baptized. According to this system, God is one person, who, at his pleasure, presents to mortals the different aspects of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; or, in other words, the Father, Son, and Spirit are only names and offices of the same person, who was in heaven called the Father, on earth the Son, and, as exerting his power on the creation, the Holy Spirit.

The grand objections against this system are, that it totally destroys the distinction of persons which the Scriptures teach,—that it confounds the sender with the person sent—him that begat with him that was begotten—and the Holy Ghost with the Father, from whom he is said to proceed. Tertullian, who wrote against Praxeas in the second century, and the writers of the third, who opposed Sabellius, urge, with great strength of argument, the various passages in which this distinction is expressed or implied; and that they might place in the most odious light the doctrine by which it was confounded, they gave to Sabellius and his followers the name of Patropassians,—meaning to represent it as a consequence of their doctrine, that the God and Father of all had endured those sufferings which the Scriptures ascribe to Jesus Christ.

It is the opinion of many, and by no means an improbable one, that the Ante-Nicene Fathers, in their opposition to Sabellianism, and desire to avoid even the appearance of approach towards that system, may have used language, with the sole view of preserving the distinction of persons in the Godhead, which would seem to intimate that they doubted the divinity of the Son. This

\* [Sabellius, an African, was bishop or presbyter of Cyrenaiæ. The general reader is referred to the Church Histories.]

circumstance ought certainly to be taken into the account, which has not always been the case, in all our attempts to ascertain the opinion of these Fathers with reference to the Trinity. I have little doubt that Arianism sprang out of a desire to avoid Sabellianism: it is not therefore to be wondered at, if opposition to this latter system gave birth and currency to forms of expression which would seem to discover a leaning towards the former, while no feeling of the kind existed in the minds of the writers.

§ 8. "The language employed by some of the ancient writers, in condemning Sabellianism, encouraged Arius, about the beginning of the fourth century, to avoid every appearance of confounding the Father and the Son, by broaching an opinion which his contemporaries represent as an innovation, unheard of till that time. His system was this. The one eternal God, the source of all being and power, did, in the beginning, before anything was made, produce by his own will a most perfect creature, to whom he communicated a large measure of glory and power. By this creature God made the worlds, all things that are in heaven, and that are on the earth; so that he alone proceeded immediately from God, while all other creatures not only existed after him, but were called into being by his instrumentality, and placed by the Father under his administration. Having been the Creator of the first man, he was, from the beginning, the medium of all Divine communication with the human race. He appeared to the patriarchs; he spake by the prophets; and in the fulness of time he was incarnate, *i. e.* clothed with that body which, by the immediate operation of God, was formed out of the Virgin Mary: and thus, according to the Arian system, the man Christ Jesus had a real body like his brethren. But that body, instead of being animated by a human soul, was informed

by the super-angelical Spirit, who had been with God from the beginning, who condescended to leave that glory, partook in the sorrow and agony which filled up the life of Jesus, and, in recompence of this humiliation and obedience, was exalted to be the Saviour, the Sovereign, and the Judge of mankind." According to this system, Jesus Christ, though the most exalted of all creatures, is only a creature; and consequently it is to be opposed by all the arguments which go to prove the true and proper deity of the Son of God. I say, the true and proper deity of the Son of God; because Arius himself admitted that Jesus Christ was God, because he was constituted God, though this did not satisfy (as, indeed, how should it?) his colleague Alexander, nor the great body of Christians in those times. Various expedients were adopted to bring Alexander and Arius to one mind: all, however, were unavailing. The religious combatants were too warmly engaged to listen to the counsel even of majesty. Finding all other resources ineffectual, Constantine the Great called together the well known Council of Nice. [This council was convoked, by order of the Emperor, in the year A. D. 325, at Nice (or Nicæa), a city of Bithynia, for the purpose of healing the divisions occasioned by the Arian controversy. Arius was an African. He was a presbyter of the church at Alexandria at the time this controversy raged. The Council of Nice decreed, that the Son was *consubstantial* with the Father (*ὁμοούσιος τῷ πατρί*), excommunicated Arius, and the Emperor banished him. He died in the year 336, at Constantinople.] It consisted of 318 bishops, besides a multitude of presbyters, deacons, and others, amounting in the whole to 2,048 persons. This council, who knew the sense in which Arius applied the words God, and only begotten Son of God, to Jesus Christ, wished to

frame such a creed as could not be repeated by those who held the Arian doctrines. This they accordingly did. Arius was condemned on the three following points. Although he carried back the existence of the Son before all worlds, and so before all times, yet it was possible, according to his system, to conceive some point from whence that existence commenced.\* Again, the Son had no existence till the act of the Father produced him.† Finally, he was produced, not out of the substance of the Father, but, like other creatures, out of nothing.‡ And to prevent Arius, and others who held his opinion, from repeating the authorized creed of the church, they more clearly defined the true and proper deity of the Son than had by it been defined before. The words of the Nicene Creed, literally translated from the Greek, are these. “We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things both visible and invisible, and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only begotten of the Father, *i.e.* to say of the substance of the Father, God of Gods, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, of the same substance with the Father, by whom all things were made, both in heaven and in earth, who for us men and our salvation came down, and was incarnate, being made man.”

§ 9. The word, in this addition to the creed, adopted by the Nicene Council, which requires the most particular attention, upon account of its frequent use in the controversy concerning the Trinity, is *homoousios* [ὁμοούσιος]. It is compounded of *homos* [ὁμος], *idem*—the

\* ἦν ποτὲ ὁρὲ οὐκ ἦν; [*i.e.* There was a time when he (*i.e.* Christ) did not exist.]

† πρὶν γεννηθῆναι οὐκ ἦν; [*i.e.* Before he was begotten (*i.e.* by the Father) he was not.]

‡ ἐκ οὐκ ὄντων ἐγένετο; [*i.e.* He was made from nothing.]

same, and *ousia* [οὐσία], *substantia*—substance. It expresses the amount of those images which had been employed by the succession of writers, from the earliest times, to mark the relation between the Father and the Son; one of the most common and significant of which is introduced into the creed itself, *Phos ek Photòs* [φῶς ἐκ φωτός], Light of Light. As a derived light is the same in nature with the original light at which it was kindled, so whatever be the meaning of φῶς when applied to the Father, the word must have the same meaning when the Son is called φῶς ἐκ φωτός.

This word *homousios* [ὁμοούσιος] the Arians could not admit into their confessions. They held that the Son was produced immediately by the Father, out of nothing. But they saw that, if he be of the same substance with God, he is God; and that if he is God, he cannot have a temporary precarious existence, but must have always been, with the Father, what he now is. This word, therefore, became the mark of distinction between the Arians and the orthodox concerning the person of Christ. “And the precise amount of *ὁμοούσιος*,” says one who has well studied the controversy, “when applied to the Son, is this,—that although it be implied in the name of the Son that he proceeded from the Father, and although, in reference to his proceeding from the Father, he be called the only begotten of the Father, yet the essential glory and perfections of the Father and the Son are the same.” There is a circumstance respecting the ancient use of the word *ὁμοούσιος*, which it is proper to state, because it creates some embarrassment, and has been the subject of satire and ridicule. This word, which the Council of Nice introduced into their creed as the badge of orthodoxy, had been prohibited by a council which met sixty years

before at Antioch; and this inconsistency between two early councils has been stated in a light very unfavourable to the uniformity of the Christian faith. But the true account of the matter appears to be this. At the time of the council at Antioch, the controversy was with the Sabellians, who denied the distinction of persons between the Father and the Son. The Sabellians, employing every method to fix an odium upon the doctrine generally held concerning the Son, represented the word *homoousios* [ὁμοούσιος], which Christians often used, as implying that there was a substance anterior to the Father and the Son, of which each received a part. The Council of Antioch judged that the easiest way of repelling this attack of the Sabellians was by laying aside the use of *homoousios* [ὁμοούσιος]; and although they did not mean to acknowledge that those who had used the word held the doctrine said by the Sabellians to be couched under it, they effectually disowned that doctrine by recommending that other terms should be employed for expressing the catholic opinion. At the time of the Council of Nice, Sabellianism was less an object of attention. The impossibility of reconciling that system with the language of Scripture had been completely exposed; the sense of the church with regard to the distinction of the Father and the Son had been precisely expressed; there was little danger of any misapprehension of terms upon this subject; and a new adversary, who held opinions directly opposite to those of Sabellius, but whose system was conceived to be not less inconsistent with Scripture, by agreeing with the church in the expression which had been introduced into former creeds concerning the Son, seemed to demand some unequivocal declaration of the common faith. The Council of Nice, therefore, whose faith we have the

best reason for thinking was the same with that of the Council of Antioch, revived the word *homoousios* [ὁμοούσιος], not in the Sabellian sense, upon account of which the Council of Antioch had laid it aside, but in the sense in which it had been used by more ancient writers, and in which it was perfectly agreeable to the general strain of their doctrine; and the reason of the council adopting this particular phrase was this,—that no other could be found so diametrically opposite to the Arian system. For although the Arians might call Jesus *God*—meaning that he was constituted God,—and might say that he was begotten of the Father—meaning by begotten created,—yet, as they held that he was made out of nothing,\* they could not say that he was of the substance of the Father;† and as they said that he was produced from another substance,‡ being a creature in respect to the Creator, they could not say that he was *homoousios* [ὁμοούσιος].§ Eusebius, the patron of the Arians, declared, in a letter to the Council of

\* ἐξ οὐκ οντων. † ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας πατρὸς. ‡ ἐκ τῆς ἐτέρας οὐσίας.

§ There is a strange blunder in Dr. Doddridge's Lectures on the Trinity with reference to this point, which I think it right to mention. "Before the Council of Nice," says the Doctor, "they generally spoke of the Son as having had a glorious nature pre-existent to his incarnation: they represented him as derived from the Father, yet nevertheless so partaking of the Father's nature as to be called God of Gods, Light of Light; and they illustrate this in general by the simile of one taper being kindled by another, and of rays proceeding from the sun. This after the Council of Nice," adds the Doctor, "was explained by the word *ὁμοούσιον*; and it was reckoned heretical to say that the Son was *ὁμοούσιον*." This must, I imagine, be a typographical error. The word *ὁμοούσιον* was pitched upon as the very badge of orthodoxy, as a term which the Arians could not employ. There is no ecclesiastical historian who does not testify to this. Dr. Doddridge should have said, "It was <sup>not</sup> reckoned heretical to say that the Son was not *ὁμοούσιον*."—*Lectures on Pneumatology, Ethics, and Divinity*, lect. clxii., § 4. 2. Leeds Edition.



Nice, that this word was incompatible with their tenets; and for this very reason, we are told, it was adopted by the council, that according to an expression of Ambrose, which has been often quoted, "with the sword, which the heresy itself had drawn from the scabbard, they might cut off the head of the monster."

I shall prosecute this subject in my next lecture, endeavouring to show you how some of the modern opinions concerning the doctrine of the Trinity have naturally grown out of these more ancient statements; and where all, as I cannot but think, have overstepped that modesty and caution with which this ineffable subject ought always to be approached.

## LECTURE III.

### THE TRINITY.

(CONTINUED.)

Definition of terms:—the unwarrantable speculations of the ancient church traced to their sources, and examined:—generation of the Son, and procession of the Holy Ghost:—the sense in which the term Son is applied to the second person in the Trinity:—posteriority, derivation and inferiority implied in that term:—the views of the ancient church degrading to the Son of God.

§ 1. WE have seen in the preceding lecture that the term *homousios* [ὁμοούσιος] was fixed upon by the Council of Nice, as constituting a certain line of distinction between the orthodox and the Arian party, which at that early period had gained many partizans, and disturbed the tranquillity of the church. Implying, as it does, that there is an essential sameness of nature between the persons in the Godhead, no one, it is manifest, who believed Christ to be formed out of nothing, which all Arians do, how highly soever they may seem to exalt him, could say with the Nicene Creed that he was consubstantial with the Father (ὁμοούσιος τῷ πατρί). There is yet another term in frequent use by the ancient writers on the Trinity, and the meaning of which it is necessary for you to understand, in order to a full com-

prehension of the doctrine of the church upon this subject. It is *hypostasis* [ὑπόστασις]. The catholic system of the Trinity was expressed fully by the ancient church in the following manner, *μία οὐσία και τρεῖς ὑπόστασεις*, i. e. one substance and three subsistences; or, *εἰς Θεὸς ἐν τρισὶν ὑπόστασεσι*, i. e. one God in three subsistences. The ecclesiastical sense of this word *hypostasis* [ὑπόστασις], we learn from the best authors, was not perfectly ascertained in the beginning of the fourth century. By some it was considered as denoting the being or substance of a thing, and so is equivalent to *ousia* [οὐσία], substance; by others it was understood to mean that which has a subsistence, the thing subsisting, a person. It was evidently understood in the former sense, as equivalent to *οὐσία*, by the Council of Nice; for that council, after stating the doctrine of the church concerning the Son, proceeded to anathematize those who said of him that he was formed of another *hypostasis*, or substance, than the Father.\* Understanding *ὑπόστασις* as equivalent with *οὐσία*, the Council of Sardis, in the fourth century, declared that there was only one *hypostasis* of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.† Had the council meant by *hypostasis* [ὑπόστασις] a person, their decree would have been pure Sabellianism. Some alarm was accordingly spread through the church when the decree was first published, from an apprehension that this might be the meaning of it. But when the matter came to be investigated, it was found that, as the Council of Sardis understood *hypostasis* [ὑπόστασις] in the first sense, and those who said that there were three *hypostases* [τρεῖς εἶναι ὑπόστασεις] in the second, the meaning of both was precisely the same; and after this explana-

\* ἐξ ἑτέρας ὑπόστασεως.

† μίαν εἶναι ὑπόστασιν τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος.

tion, it was generally understood that *οὐσία* should denote the being or essence of a thing,—*ὑπόστασις*, the person subsisting. In this last sense it had been used by the Platonic school, and by many of the Christian writers, before the Council of Nice. It is explained in the ancient Greek lexicons by *prosōpon* [πρόσωπον], and it was rendered by the Latins, *persona*, a living intelligent agent.

Thus the faith of the ancient church was distinguished from Arianism on the one hand, and Sabellianism on the other. The assertion that in the Godhead there were three hypostases (*τρεις ὑπόστασεις*) separated it from the latter: the declaration that these hypostases (*ὑπόστασεις*) were consubstantial (*ὁμοούσιοι*) prevented its being confounded with the former.

§ 2. If the ancient church had rested here—if they had satisfied themselves with the general assertion that in the Godhead there are three distinctions or subsistences, to each of whom personal and Divine properties are ascribed, and yet that these subsistences or persons (the precise distinction between whom we pretend not to know) are so united, the manner of their union being mysterious and incomprehensible to us, as that they constitute not three Gods but one God,—they would have done well—they would have deserved the thanks of the church of God to the latest period of time. But unfortunately—as I cannot but think at least—they did more. . They speculated with reference to the manner or mode in which the sacred three are united,—a subject which we might have supposed they could not fail to see must be infinitely beyond the grasp of the human mind. I shall first lay before you a short abstract of the views they entertained on this mysterious subject, and then state what appears to have led them to adopt

the sentiments they held; examining, as I go along, the solidity of the foundation on which their opinion was built.

On the first point, it may be observed, that though the ancient church contended that there were three persons in the Godhead, each of whom possessed all Divine perfections—the Son and the Holy Ghost being ὁμοούσιοι with the Father,—yet they denied that the nature and perfections of all the persons in the Sacred Trinity were underived. The Father, as they conceived, was the fountain of Deity. They called the Father ἀρχή, (not indeed in the common sense of that word,) *the beginning*, as if the Father existed *before* the Son and the Holy Ghost,—but in the philosophical sense of the word, *the principle from which another arises*; and as such the Son and Holy Ghost, as they supposed, derived their essence from him. Though the Son, as being consubstantial with the Father (ὁμοούσιος τῷ πατρὶ), must possess all the essential perfections of the Deity, he is, according to their representations, less than the Father, inasmuch as he has received them from him. He is *auto-theos* [αὐτοθεός]—a word in frequent use among the ancient writers upon the Trinity—if the word be understood to mean *ipse Deus*, “very God:” but he is not αὐτοθεός, if the word be understood to mean *Deus a se ipso*, “God from” or “of very God;” for in this sense the Father alone is αὐτοθεός, while the Son is Θεὸς ἐκ Θεοῦ (God of God).

Yet though these writers speak of the Divine essence being communicated by the Father to the Son and Holy Ghost, they are not to be understood as meaning that the existence of these two persons had a beginning, or that the Father, after existing for some time alone, brought them into being by an act of his will, and

imparted to them such powers as he chose. That is pure Arianism, and cannot be received by those who hold three persons in *μία οὐσία*, i. e. in one substance. The Athanasians therefore, in consistency with the leading principles of their system,\* considered the Son and the Holy Ghost as having always existed with the Father; and they illustrated their meaning by saying, that as light cannot exist without effulgence, nor the sun without emitting his rays, nor the mind without reason—so the Father never existed without the Son and the Spirit.

The reasons which led the ancient church to adopt these sentiments, with reference to the connection of which we have been speaking between the persons of the Sacred Trinity, appear to me to be three.

*In the First place*,—the currency of that phraseology by which they were in the habit of asserting the true and proper Deity of the Son, and which, as we have seen, was embodied by the Council of Nice in the general term *homoousios* [ὁμοούσιος]. The Son was said to be God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God,—language which, while it was calculated to show that the Son was of the same nature with the Father, might very naturally, and almost imperceptibly, instil into their minds the conception that he had derived his essence and his perfections from the Father.

*Secondly*.—The opinion of the ancient church, that the Father was the fountain of Deity, &c., appears to have been—in a measure at least—prompted by a desire to reconcile their statements concerning three persons in the Godhead with the unity of God. God, they said, is one, because the Son and the Holy Ghost are referred to one cause (*εἰς ἐν αἴτιον*), spring, or principle of their existence. They did not believe in three unoriginate

beings, co-ordinate and independent. But they believed in three persons, from the first of whom the second and third did, from all eternity, derive the nature and perfections of the Godhead; and upon this communication of the substance of the Father to the Son, and the substance of the Father and the Son to the Holy Ghost, they built—partly at least—their faith in the Divine Unity.

It is, however, surprising to me that this notion of the communication of the substance or essence of the Godhead, by the first, to the second and third persons of the Sacred Trinity, should have ever been thought by them to diminish the pressure of the difficulty with reference to the unity of God. That difficulty results not from the manner in which the Son and Holy Ghost are conceived of as obtaining their essence and personality, but from the acknowledged fact that they are personally distinct from the Father. To say that they derived this personal distinction from the Father, rather increases than diminishes the difficulty of conceiving that they are at the same time one with him.

Feeling in some measure, as it would appear, the force of this remark, the ancient church, to establish the Divine Unity, were accustomed to speak of the three persons of the Godhead as being inseparably joined together. So necessary and so indissoluble is this connection, that as the Father never existed without the Son and the Spirit, so the Son and the Spirit were not separated from him by being produced out of his substance. Every idea of section, and division, and interval, which is suggested to us by material objects and by individuals of the same species, is to be laid aside when we raise our conceptions to that distinction of persons under which the Deity is revealed to us in the

Scriptures. We are to attempt to conceive that this distinction does not dissolve the continuity of nature—that while every one of the three persons has his distinct subsistence, they are never separated from one another.

There were two phrases, we are told, which were employed to mark this idea. In order to show that they did not consider the Son as sent forth from the Father, as our children are sent forth to have an existence separated from their parents, they called his generation an interior, not an external production, meaning that he remained in the Father, from whom he was produced; and in order to mark the indissoluble connection of all the three persons, they used the word *περιχώρησις*, or *εκπεριχώρησις*, *circum-incesso*, which is thus defined,—“that union by which one being exists in another, not only by a participation of nature, but by the most intimate presence with it, so that, although the two beings are distinct, they dwell in and penetrate one another.” They considered both these phrases as warranted by such expressions in Scripture as the following: “That ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him.” And they considered this indwelling of the persons in one another as completing the unity of God.

That the three persons of the Sacred Trinity are, in some mysterious manner, united so as that this plurality does not impair the unity of the Godhead is a most important sentiment. But the attempt of the ancient church to explain this union, in the statement I have now given you, is worse than useless. It crowds together a heap of words without any meaning. It mocks us by substituting sound for sense. It gives us ashes for bread. It is a clear display of that lack of modesty which has been too often manifested with reference to this ineffable



subject; and it may serve as a beacon to guard us against so foolish an attempt.

But, *Thirdly*, the statement of the ancient church, that the Father is the fountain of Deity, may be partly traced to their conception of the meaning and application of the terms, Son, only-begotten, and the like, when used with reference to the second person of the adorable Trinity; as well as the term, procession, when used with reference to the third. For as these words were considered as marking, not a distinction of office amongst the persons of the Godhead, but some essential difference which subsists amongst them as Divine subsistences, it would seem as if they were driven to the necessity either of calling the Father the fountain of Deity, or of believing that the terms, Son, only-begotten, &c. are used as signs of ideas totally different from any which are conveyed by them with reference to other subjects, and on other occasions. And it deserves notice, as a strong confirmation of the truth of the foregoing statement, that almost all, both in ancient and modern times, who have held the notion of the eternal generation of Christ—or, in other words, who have supposed that the terms Son, only-begotten, &c. are applied to him as one of the subsistences of the Godhead—have connected with that the ancient sentiment that the Father is the fountain of Deity, having communicated the whole of the Divine nature to the Son and the Holy Spirit. This was the avowed sentiment of Dr. Waterland, Bishops Pearson and Bull. It seems also to have been the opinion of Dr. Owen. In his work on the Hebrews, he says, in the course of his Exposition of the first chapter and third verse, “As the sun in comparison of the beam is of itself, and the beam of the sun; so is the Father of himself, and the Son of the Father. As the sun, without dimi-

nution or partition of its substance, without change or alteration in its nature, produceth the beam, so is the Son begotten of the Father. As the sun, in order of nature, is before the beam, but in time both are co-existent; so is the Father, in order of nature, before the Son, though in existence both co-eternal. As the beam is distinct from the sun, so that the sun is not the beam, and the beam is not the sun; so is it between the Father and the Son. As the beam is never separated from the sun, nor can the sun be without the beam; no more can the Son be from the Father, nor was the Father ever without the Son. As the sun cannot be seen but by the beam, no more can the Father but in and by the Son."

§ 3. Now as these two sentiments have been almost invariably connected with each other, the question naturally occurs—"Was the ancient church right in considering what is said in the Scriptures concerning the generation of the Son, and the procession of the Holy Ghost, as intended to exhibit some essential difference which exists among them as persons in the Godhead, by which they are distinguished from each other, and both of them from the Father?" This question brings me at once to the discussion of a point which, I confess, I would on various accounts rather have avoided, if I could have done it consistently, in my apprehension, with honour and conscience,—the question with reference to the Sonship of Christ. Many great and good men tell us, in opposition to the sentiments of the ancient church, that the terms Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are descriptive of the office which these Divine persons sustain in the economy of redemption; and that, though they imply their true and proper Deity, they have no reference to them merely as Divine persons; and of course give no sanction to the opinion that the Father is the fountain

of Deity; and indeed leave us as much in ignorance of the nature of that connection which exists amongst the sacred three as they found us,—the object of Divine revelation being, not to show what God is in himself, but what he is in relation to us. This, I acknowledge, is my opinion,—an opinion formed on a careful examination of the subject. Nor do I stand alone. I believe it to have been the opinion of your late tutor.\* It is the sentiment of Mr. Roby, of a host of others; and of Dr. Wardlaw, himself a host: and it needs only, I think, to be more fully and frequently laid before the eye of the public, to be more generally received than it is. I would not however, after all, introduce this topic, were it not adapted, in my judgment, to remove certain misconceptions with respect to the doctrine of the Trinity. And I shall chiefly confine my remarks to the terms which are used in reference to the second person of the Trinity; since if it can be shown that they are not intended to describe the manner and order of his existence in the Godhead, but the relation he sustains to the first person of the Sacred Trinity in the economy of salvation, it will be easily admitted that by the procession of the Holy Ghost is not meant the derivation of his essence from the Father, but the commission with which he came forth to execute the office he sustains in the work of redemption.

§ 4. Before I enter upon a direct examination of the sense in which the term Son is applied to the second person of the Trinity, I would observe that the correctness of the sentiments entertained by the ancient church on this point is, I cannot but think, justly brought

\* [The late Rev. J. Fletcher, D.D., who preceded Dr. Payne in the Residency and Divinity Tutorship of the Academy at Blackburn. These lectures were first delivered to the students of that institution.—ED.]

under suspicion, by its tendency either to degrade the Lord Jesus Christ, or to throw impenetrable obscurity over all our statements concerning the Trinity. The term son, according to its usual acceptation, does beyond all question imply posteriority, derivation, inferiority. A son comes into existence after his father, not merely in the order of nature, but of time. A son derives his being from his father, instrumentally at least. A son is inferior, as a son, to his father. Now if the terms, begotten, Son, &c., when used with reference to the second person of the Trinity, are intended to describe the relation he bears as a Divine person to the first person of the Trinity, they either bear the sense which we commonly attach to them, or they do not. If the latter be the case, if they bear a different sense—a sense, it may be, diametrically opposite,—they do not reveal, of course, the manner and order of his eternal subsistence in the Godhead. On the contrary, they tend to throw darkness rather than light upon this subject, the words being adapted to mislead. And if such be the case, how can we rescue the sacred writers, or rather the spirit of God, under whose influence they wrote, from a charge of guilt in employing them? If, on the other hand, they do bear the sense commonly attached to them, how can the Divinity of the Son be maintained in connection with the use of them? The term son necessarily implies posteriority. A son comes into existence after his father. The second person of the Trinity is, as a Divine person, the Son of the first; he must therefore be posterior to him, and so his eternal existence is given up. In reply to this, Dr. Williams has said, that even among men, “notwithstanding the infinite disparity between the First Cause and a human being, between the voluntary acts of a creature and a necessary property of God, it

would be difficult, if not impossible, to form an idea of fatherhood and sonship but as correlative and co-existent. One may, indeed, exist as a man, before his son, but not as father of such a son. In the order of existence, as conceived by a Trinitarian, the notion of essence is prior to that of personality, as it is prior to that of attributes; but as to personal relations, or positive modes of subsistence, there is no more reason to suppose priority, than there is in saying that goodness in God is prior to wisdom, and power posterior to both." With all my regard for Dr. Williams—and it almost approaches to reverence—I must yet say that this reasoning appears to me something exceedingly like quibbling. We contend that a *being*, who can with propriety be denominated a son, must be posterior to another *being* who has a just title to be called his father; and the Doctor replies by telling us, what no one in his senses ever thought of denying, that the character or relation of son is not posterior in its existence to the character or relation of father. If the first person in the Trinity be the Father, and the second the Son, 'as Father and Son they must be, as is universally the case, correlative and co-existent; but the first person must be prior to the second, and the second posterior to the first. Dr. Williams, indeed, says that there is "no personal subsistence to be conceived of prior to fatherhood and sonship; nay," he adds, "these relations are supposed to constitute the personalities."\* But to identify personality with these relations, or to say that they constitute the personalities, is to say what is absurd, or to give up the personality of the Godhead altogether. Relations necessarily suppose persons who are the sub-

\* Vide *Syllabus of Lectures*, p. 46; or, more fully, *Works of Dr. Doddridge*, vol. v., Leeds Edition, pp. 182, 183, *Notes of Dr. Williams*.

jects of them. They are not positive existences. They are merely the connections which one being sustains to another. To say that fatherhood and sonship are the personalities, or—as it must mean to support his argument—the persons of the Godhead, is, I must say again, absurd or worse. I do not say that, according to Dr. Williams's views, the first person of the Trinity must have existed in the character of a Father, before the existence of the second in the character or relation of a Son: but I do maintain that if the first person, as to his Divine nature or subsistence, bears the title of Father, and the second the title of Son, on that account the Son must be posterior to the Father; or the terms Father and Son are used in a sense totally different from that which is usually attached to them, in a sense of which we can form no conception,—that is, they are to us words without meaning. It is in vain, I think at least, to tell us, that though the second person of the Trinity is called the Son with respect to his Divine nature or subsistence in the Godhead, he may yet be eternal, as the perfections of God are eternal, because no term which in itself conveys necessarily the notion of posteriority is ever applied to them. The perfections of God are not said to be begotten,—they are not called his sons. It is on the application of these expressions to Christ that I ground my opinion that the second person, as a Son, is inferior and posterior to the Father. And because, as one of the Divine subsistents in the Godhead, he is in all respects equal with the Father, the plain and proper conclusion surely is, that as a Divine subsistent he does not bear the name of Son, that that title is given to him on account of the office he assumed as Emmanuel, or God with us.

But, further, the idea of a son is inseparably connected with that of derivation. A son derives his being,

instrumentally at least, from his father. In fact, the ideas of imparting and receiving existence necessarily enter into all our conceptions of the parental and filial relation. If the second person in the Trinity, as one of the personal subsistents in the Godhead, is the Son of God, how can we conceive of him as underived? unless indeed the term Son, in this application of it, be the symbol of an idea of which we can form no conception. Indeed, the idea of derivation, both as it relates to the second and third persons of the Trinity, so far from being rejected, was, as we have seen, constantly affirmed by the ancient church. The Father was called *αἰτία υἱου*, *i. e.* the cause of the Son. It was said to be implied in the very name of the Father that he was the cause and origin of the Son, of whom he was begotten;\* and the difference of the three persons was conceived to consist in this: that the Father was uncaused (*αναίτιος*), and that both the Son and the Holy Ghost were caused (*αἰτιατοί*). Different words were employed to express the manner of causation with regard to the two persons who were considered the caused (*οἱ αἰτιατοί*). It was said of the one that he *was begotten*, of the other that he *proceeded*. The generation of the one was suggested by his being called in Scripture the Son of God, only-begotten of the Father.† The procession of the other was suggested, partly, by his being called *πνεῦμα*, from *πνέω*, *spiro*, — *i. e.* I send forth breath; and partly by our Lord saying in one place (John xv. 26), “The Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father.”‡

As to the manner of the procession of the Holy Ghost, there was we learn, about the eighth and ninth

\* *αἰτία καὶ ἀρχὴ τοῦ υἱοῦ ἐξ αὐτοῦ γεννηθέντος.*

† *υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, μονογενὴς παρὰ πατρός.*

‡ *τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας ὃ παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται.*

centuries, a very warm dispute between the Greek and Latin churches, whether the Spirit proceeded from the Father only, or from the Father and the Son: and the controversy arose to such a height that they charged one another with heresy and schism, when neither side, as one has suggested, well understood what they contended about; and if they had agreed to the healing expedient afterwards proposed, that they should mutually acknowledge that the Holy Ghost was *from* the Father *by* the Son, the matter would have been left, as Dr. Ridgley slyly observes, about as much in the dark as before. There were also minuter shades of opinion, or rather, perhaps, some little differences of statement among those who held the opinion, that the terms Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were applied to the sacred three as subsistents in the Godhead. The Father was sometimes called the fountain of the Trinity, at others the fountain of the Deity or Godhead. He was said by some to have communicated the Divine *essence* to the Son, by others the Divine *personality*. But so far from denying, they all seem to have considered the idea of derivation as inseparably connected with that of sonship. The second person of the Trinity as a Divine subsistent in the Godhead is called, as they imagined, the Son of God; and hence, and because he is said to be the only-begotten of the Father, he must, as a Divine person, have been in some manner derived from the Father. I cannot but think they were right in considering the idea of a son inseparably connected with that of derivation; and partly on this account I do not admit that the title of Son is given to the second person as one of the subsistents in the Godhead. I can form no idea of a derived God. The expression is, in my judgment, self-contradictory. Eternity and self-existence enter



into all our conceptions of Deity. A being whose existence is not underived is not God. And if the second person of the Trinity bears the name of Son as one of the subsistents in the Godhead, it is manifest, that although his eternity should be admitted, as the Divine perfections are said to be eternal, and indeed are really so,—it is manifest, I say, that although his eternity should be admitted, he cannot be underived. Indeed, it is plainly affirmed that he is not. “Whatever,” says Dr. Owen, “belongs unto the person of the Son, as the person of the Son, he receives it all from the Father by eternal generation. All the properties of the Divine nature are communicated unto him, together with personality, from the Father. Thus he receives, as his personality, so all Divine excellences, from the Father.” “No man,” says an able author, commenting upon this paragraph, “can suspect Dr. Owen of having the least intention to favour Arianism; yet his words do not materially differ from those of Dr. Clarke, who says, ‘The Son is not self-existent, but derives his being and all his *attributes* from the Father, as from the supreme cause.’ Arians indeed deny that the Son is possessed of the same essence or Divine nature with the Father: but they seem to be more consistent in this than those who affirm that the person of the Son is absolutely *eternal*, and yet was originally *generated*; or that such properties of the Divine nature as are confessedly *incommunicable* were, notwithstanding, *communicated* to him. True, they say his generation is *eternal*; but we can have no idea of his generation, without conceiving of it as an act or event which took place at *some time*, however long it might be before the creation of the world. And if to avoid this, it should be said that he was not begotten at *any time*, it is only saying in other words

that he *never was* begotten, which contradicts the plain testimony of Scripture."

But, again, the term Son implies not only posteriority and derivation, but inferiority. In the common usage of the term, that this is the case I need not stop to prove. How then can it be thought to apply to the second person of the Trinity, as a Divine subsistent in the Godhead, by those who maintain at the same time his true and proper Deity? And yet while the ancient church maintained that the Son possesses all the essential perfections of the Godhead, they yet thought him as a Divine person inferior to the Father; and they thought so because, as they imagined, he had received these perfections from the Father. Nay, they even went so far as to consider this essential inferiority of the Son as a Divine person, to the Father, as the ground or reason of the different offices which they assumed in the economy of redemption. "When Jesus says 'My Father is greater than I,' " was their language, "although he could not mean any difference of nature, he may mean that pre-eminence of the Father which is necessarily implied in his being (*ἀγέννητος*) unbegotten,—a pre-eminence," they add, "which does not appear to us to admit of any act of condescension in the Father, of his receiving a commission, or being appointed to hold an office; whereas there is a manifest congruity in the Son, who derived his nature from the Father, being employed to exert the perfections of the Godhead, in the accomplishment of a particular purpose." Hence as our Lord speaks of the Father giving him a commission, of his being sent by God, of his coming to do the will of God, so those ancient writers, who represent the Son as equal to the Father, speak of him at the same time as messenger, servant of God (*ἄγγελος, ὑπηρέτης Θεοῦ*); and the fitness of that office,

which he undertook for the salvation of mankind, results from the essential subordination of the Son to the Father.

§ 5. I will only say of such statements, that they appear to me to degrade the Son of God. I cannot but think, therefore, that there is strong ground to imagine that the ancient church were mistaken, when they considered the terms Son of God, begotten, &c. descriptive of what the Saviour is as a Divine person.

## LECTURE IV.

### THE TRINITY.

(CONTINUED.)

Examination of passages thought to support the idea of eternal generation:

—passages that afford evidence that the terms Son, begotten, &c. refer to Christ as God-man:—objections to the latter view answered, —*first* objection, an argument in support of the doctrine of the Trinity is lost; *second*, he is called Son before his incarnation; *third*, he ought to be called the Son of the Holy Ghost also; *fourth*, his Sonship and his incarnation are distinct; *fifth*, the titles, the Christ, the Son of God, have no meaning, if there be no distinction between his Sonship and his office of Mediator; *sixth* objection, the gift of the Son to redeem man is such as to involve the idea of eternal Sonship.

§ 1. In prosecuting our inquiries with respect to the application of the term Son to the second person of the Trinity, I shall first refer to those passages which are thought to prove that he is called a Son, begotten, &c. as one of the subsistents in the Godhead: secondly, I shall produce that evidence from Scripture which goes to support the sentiment that these terms have reference to him as Mediator: and, thirdly, I shall reply to some objections which are frequently urged against this view of the subject.

FIRST.—With reference to the first point, it may

be observed that one of the most common passages referred to in support of the doctrine of eternal generation is contained in Psalm ii. 7: "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." Here, by a strange latitude of explanation, the words "this day" are stated to mean eternity; and the remaining words are represented as denoting that communication of the Divine essence or personality to the Son, which took place in eternity, by which he is rendered a subsistent in the Godhead distinct from the Father. Now to pass over the circumstance that this statement conveys no distinct idea to the mind,—for I challenge any man who uses such language to state, in plain English, what he means by it,—I would observe that a very slight attention to the context, and to the commentary of the apostle, might serve to convince us that such cannot be its meaning. "I will declare the decree," says the speaker, in the immediately preceding words,—*i. e.* that which had been before decreed or determined; so that if the term begotten, in this verse, refers to the communication of the Divine essence or personality to Christ, it must be allowed to be here represented as the result of Divine purpose, and an act of the Divine will,—which is direct Arianism. Besides the whole psalm plainly speaks of Christ as Mediator: as such he is said to be set, as God's king, on his holy hill of Zion: as such he is said to intercede or ask of God; and as the result hereof, the Father is said to give him the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. And all this is spoken as a further explanation of the words, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." Moreover, the apostle distinctly affirms, in Acts xiii. 32, 33, that the words we are considering were fulfilled or accomplished by the resur-

rection of Christ: "The promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again, as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee."

The next Scripture brought to prove the eternal generation of the Son is Prov. viii. 22-25: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth." In reply to this, a master in Israel—one peculiarly mighty in the Scripture—has said, "It does not appear that by *wisdom* here is meant the person of Christ at all. No other part of Scripture applies this passage to him; nor is he ever held forth as a female personage, though his church, which is his spouse, is spoken of as such." There is some weight in these remarks; but I am rather disposed to agree with the following interpretation of these words, viz. that they refer to Christ as Mediator. "When God is said to possess him in the beginning of his way, the meaning is, that in his eternal design of grace relating to the redemption of man, the Father possessed or laid claim to him as his Son, or servant, appointed in the human nature to bring about that great work. And accordingly it follows, 'I was set up from everlasting,'—that is, foreordained of God to be the Mediator and Head of his elect. And this is in perfect harmony with what follows (verses 30, 31): 'I was daily his delight,'—that is, God the Father was well pleased with him, foreseeing, as he did from all eternity, what he would do in time to secure the glory of his perfections

in the redemption of man; as God publicly testified his well-pleasedness in him, when he was actually engaged in this work. And it is further added, that he was always rejoicing before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and his delights were with the children of men; which signifies the great pleasure Christ had in his eternal foresight of what he would do for the sons of men, whom he is elsewhere said to have loved with an everlasting love."

The words of the prophet Micah, verse 2, with reference to the Son, have also been pressed into this cause: "Whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting." "For the understanding of which Scripture," says one, "let us consider that God's goings are sometimes taken in Scripture for what he does, whereby he renders himself the object of his people's astonishment and praise; these are his visible goings. Thus, Psalm lxxviii. 24: 'They have seen thy goings, O God; even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary,'—that is, they shall see the great things which thou wilt do for man in the work of redemption; so in this Scripture, the sense whereof we are now considering, we read of Christ's goings forth,—his invisible goings, as we may call them, or his secret purposes, or designs of grace, relating to the redemption of his people. His goings forth were from everlasting,—that is, he did from eternity design to save them, the outgoings of his heart were towards them; and as the result of this, he came into this world according to this prediction, and was born in Bethlehem, as in the foregoing words."

There are only two other passages, amongst those which are usually referred to as proofs of the eternal generation of the Son, that seem to require particular notice. They are Heb. i. 3, and John v. 26. In the

former of these, the Son is said to be the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person. By the words "the brightness of the Father's glory," as Dr. Ridgley states, is probably meant, that the glory of the Divine perfections shines forth most illustriously in Christ, our great Mediator, as the apostle expresses it elsewhere: "God hath shined in our hearts, to give the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ." By the latter expression, in which Christ is called the express image of the Father's person, adds the same author, "I humbly conceive is meant, that though his Divine nature be the same with the Father's, yet his personality is distinct; and therefore it is not said to be the same, but the image of his Father's; and it also proves his proper Divine personality as being in all respects like that of the Father, though not the same."

With respect to the language of our Lord in the fifth chapter of John,—“As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself,”—“we cannot think,” says Dr. Ridgley, “that the Father's having given to the Son to have life in himself implies his giving him the Divine perfections; for the propriety of that mode of speaking cannot be defended consistently with his proper underived Deity. But I humbly conceive that the meaning of it is this: that as the Father hath life in himself, that is, as he has eternal life, or all that fulness of grace and glory which his people are to be made partakers of, at his own disposal, and has designed to give it in his eternal purpose, so hath he given to the Son, as Mediator, to have life in himself,—that is, that as such he should be the treasurer of all this grace, and that he should have life in himself to dispense to them.” This is very agreeable to his character and office as Mediator, and with what follows,—



“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life:” and in verse 27, it is further added that he—to wit, the Father—“hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man;” which plainly denotes that this life, which he has received from the Father, is that eternal life, which he is empowered or commissioned to bestow on his people as Mediator. This he has in himself; and accordingly he is said to be full of grace and truth; and again, “It hath pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.”

§ 2. SECONDLY.—I shall produce that evidence from Scripture which goes to prove that the terms Son, begotten, &c. relate to Christ as God-man Mediator. And—

*First*,—I observe this is distinctly and explicitly affirmed by the angel in his address to Mary: “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also” (*διὸ καὶ*—and therefore, or for this cause) “that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” The holy thing born of Mary was not a mere man, nor was it unclothed Divinity: it was neither the Divine nor the human nature in contradistinction to, nor in a state of separation from one another; but it was a Divine person incarnate,—it was Emmanuel, God with us. And it was the union of the two natures, from the instant of the creation of the inferior nature, which seems to have constituted the holiness, the peculiar and emphatic sanctity of the holy thing which was to be born of the virgin. The birth of this holy thing was effected by the supernatural agency of the Holy Ghost,

and by the power of the Highest; or, in other words, these were the means and the essential process of the incarnation of God the Son in a human body; and because these means were employed, the holy thing born of Mary was to be called, because he really was, "the Son of God." Thus the passage, as it is rendered in our version, clearly enough proves that the second person of the adorable Trinity is called the Son of God on account of his miraculous incarnation. If however we may be allowed to render *διὸ καὶ* *because*, instead of *and therefore*, as it is rendered by a very able critic, this will appear still more manifest. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: because that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called, as he really is, the Son of God;" *i. e.* he is as Mediator a most extraordinary person, appointed to execute a most glorious office, the Godhead and the manhood being to be united together, upon which account he is called the Son of God; and therefore it is expedient that the formation of his human nature should be in an extraordinary way—to wit, by the power of the Holy Ghost and of the Highest.

*Secondly.*—Whenever the term Son of God is applied to Christ in the New Testament, the context sufficiently proves that it is applied to him as Mediator, and as having assumed our nature for the great work of our redemption. In the first chapter of John, he is declared to be the Word, which in the beginning was with God, *viz.* the Father, as a distinct person from him, and who was God of the same nature or essence with him. The creation of all things is also ascribed to him; but it is only when this eternal Word was made flesh that he is called the only begotten of the Father. John the Baptist saw and bare record that this is the Son of God;

but this he affirms of him whom he baptized, on whom he saw the Spirit descend, and whom he points out as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, *i. e.* surely of Jesus actually come in the flesh to effect the salvation of men. The Father declares once and again, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" but this declaration was made of that person who was baptized in Jordan, and afterwards transfigured on Mount Tabor. Jesus himself testifies that he is the Son of God. But who is it that testifies this? Even he who really was, and appeared to the Jews a man; but who at the same time could say, "I and my Father are one." This is he who, having been sanctified and sent into the world, declares himself to be the Son of God. When the centurion confessed that he was the Son of God, he doubtless understood by it that he was the Messiah. When the devils are represented as crying out, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of God," it is added that they knew he was Christ; so that the commonly received notion of the Saviour's Sonship was that he was the Christ. And in John xi. 4, when Jesus says concerning Lazarus that his sickness was not unto death,—*i. e.* not such as that he should continue in the state of the dead, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby,—the meaning is that he might give a proof of his being the Christ by raising him from the dead; and therefore when he speaks to Martha, with a design to try whether she believed that he could raise her brother from the dead, and represents himself to her as the object of faith, she replied, "I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." Again: it is said, in Acts ix. 20, that Saul, when converted, preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God,—that is,

he proved him to be the Messiah; and accordingly, when he was establishing the same doctrine, it is said that he proved that he was the "very Christ."

It is further said of Christ, that he was proved to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead. How then can the term Son be applied to him, as one of the subsistents in the Godhead merely, since the fact of his resurrection, standing by itself, is not a proof of his Divinity even? The thing that was proved by his resurrection was not his Divinity—only in so far at least as that was necessarily included in his being the Christ—but his Messiahship. This was the great subject of controversy in the days of his flesh; and which was put finally at rest by his bursting asunder the bands of death, as it was predicted the Messiah should do. In harmony with this statement, the apostle says, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, that the Lord Jesus has a more excellent name than the angels, *i. e.* the name of Son; and that this name does not belong to him as one of the subsistents in the Godhead is rendered as manifest as words can make it, by the declaration that he has obtained it by inheritance. In other words, his exaltation to the throne, his obtaining possession of the heathen for his inheritance, &c., has proved that he is the Son; so that he has gained the name by gaining the inheritance, which proves his right to it. I will only add on this subject—

*Thirdly*,—that the statement now given affords the best, and in some instances the only solution which can be given to the very opposite language which is used in the New Testament with reference to the Lord Jesus. Thus it is said, in the Gospel of John, that the Son worketh the works of the Father—that he raiseth the dead—that he is the Judge of the world—that the same

Divine honour belongs to him that is given, to the Father; and, in a word, that he and the Father are one. On the other hand, it is stated that the Son can do nothing of himself, that the Father sheweth him all things—that his doctrine was not his, but the Father's who sent him—that he declared the truth, which his Father had taught him—that he knows not the day nor the hour of judgment—that he lives by the Father, even as his people live by him; and, in short, that the Father is greater than he. Now all this is perfectly intelligible, if the term Son is applied to him as God incarnate—as Emmanuel, God with us—as a being in whom were united the two natures, Divine and human, for the specific and gracious purpose of man's redemption. In that case, it is by no means wonderful that some things should be said of the Son, at one time, which will apply only to the Divine nature; and others, at another time, which are true only of the human nature. The Son, on this supposition, is both God and man; and therefore may be said to possess limited and unlimited knowledge and power. But if the term Son be applied to Christ as a Divine person merely if it be intended to intimate some essential difference which exists between the first and the second person of the adorable Trinity, it is utterly impossible to say of the Son that he knows not the hour of judgment, that he increased in wisdom as well as in stature, without surrendering the omniscience of that Saviour in whom we have put our trust; and in that case our truth must prove a vain confidence, a broken reed, which can but pierce and destroy. I conscientiously believe that the view of the Sonship of Christ which I have endeavoured to give you rescues the doctrine of his Divinity from certain perplexities and objections, which I at least

should find it difficult to meet. It is hard—to say the least of it—to maintain the perfect equality of the Son with the Father; and if this be not done, we betray the cause of his true and proper Deity; and at the same time to maintain that these Divine persons, as Divine persons, and to mark some essential difference which exists between them as such, bear titles which in all other cases convey the relative ideas of priority and posteriority, communication and derivation, superiority and inferiority; and which in this case must either convey the same ideas, or are to us words without any meaning,—words that are highly improper, because adapted to suggest and inspire sentiments and feelings which they were not designed to communicate. I must not forget, however, that several objections against this view of the Sonship of Christ have been raised; and these thus I proceed—

§ 3. THIRDLY,—to consider. *First.*—It has been objected, that this statement destroys our argument in support of the doctrine of the Trinity; for if the names Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are not expressive of a relation essential to the eternal subsistence of these Divine persons, they cannot reveal a Trinity of persons in the Godhead. I answer, that this is a mistake; because the names are personal names, and cannot properly be applied but to persons. The relations, indeed, which they express are not essential to personality, for a person may exist without being either a father or a son; but personality is essential to these relations, for no one can be a father or a son but a person.

*Secondly.*—It is objected that Christ is called the Son of God before he became incarnate; and therefore cannot bear that title, in consequence of his assumption of our nature. “In the fulness of time, God sent forth

his Son, made of a woman, made under the law:" he must therefore have been his Son before he was sent forth. I answer, he was so in intention and appointment, though not in act and accomplishment; and therefore might, without any impropriety, be so denominated. He became actually the Son of God by his miraculous incarnation. He was such, in point of *fact*, not merely of intention, when the New Testament was committed to writing; and nothing is more common than to designate a person by his present title, when speaking of him in reference to a period previous to his possessing it. But if his being called the Son of God, before his incarnation, proves that he was so in point of fact, he must have been the Son of man antecedently to that event; for it is said of him that he came down from heaven—that he was sent, and came into the world. The truth is, that the forms of expression to which I am now alluding by no means prove that the second person of the Trinity was actually either the Messiah, or the Son of man, or the Son of God, before his coming in the flesh. They, doubtless, establish the important doctrine of the eternal pre-existence of his Divine person, but not that he eternally existed as a Son.

*Thirdly.*—It is objected that, if Christ were called the Son of God on account of his incarnation, then he would be the Son of the Holy Ghost, to whose agency his incarnation is chiefly ascribed; and therefore in this sense he could not be the only begotten of the Father. Answer: it is not true that his incarnation is chiefly ascribed to the agency of the Holy Ghost. For this wonderful transaction was effected by the power of the Highest, *i.e.* the Father; and so Christ was to be called the Son of the Highest, *i.e.* of the Father, and not the

Son of the Holy Ghost. Accordingly Christ, addressing his Father, says, "A body hast thou prepared me." It is not necessary, however, neither would it be proper, to exclude the agency of the Holy Ghost. The three Divine persons are, indeed, united in so ineffable a manner that there was a joint agency of the whole in the incarnation of the Son of God. The Holy Ghost comes upon the virgin—the power of the Highest overshadows her, and the eternal Word taketh upon him, or taketh hold of (*ἐπιλαμβάνεται*), that human body and soul thus prepared for him, as his own proper soul and body, so that it became himself; and the result was that the person thus constituted was the only begotten Son of God.

*Fourthly.*—It is objected that his Sonship is distinct from his becoming incarnate to discharge the office of Mediator; inasmuch as it is said (Heb. v. 8) that "though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." It cannot in propriety of speech, it is alleged, be said of Christ that, though he was the God-man Mediator, he learned obedience, since in that character he was under an obligation to obey and suffer: the meaning must therefore be; that though he were a Son by eternal generation, yet he condescended to put himself into such a capacity as that he was obliged to suffer, and bleed, and die as Mediator. Answer: the stress of the objection lies in the word which we render *though*, *καίπερ ὢν υἱὸς*, which may be rendered, with a very small variation, "Though being a Son, he learned obedience by the things which he suffered; but being made perfect," *i. e.* after his sufferings, "he became the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him;" and then it removes the force of the objection.

*Fifthly.*—It is objected that, since it is affirmed that



Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, there must be a distinction between his Sonship and his office; or the words which I have now quoted would be equivalent with saying that the Son of God is the Son of God. Answer: though the titles "Son of God" and "Christ" are both of them official titles, exhibiting the Lord Jesus as the Mediator between God and man, there is considerable difference in their meaning. The latter (Christ) points out his appointment to the office; the former his qualifications for it, resulting from the peculiar and mysterious constitution of his person. When we confess him to be the Christ, if the confession is made with an understanding mind, we acknowledge him to be the anointed King and Priest of his church. When we avow our conviction that he is the Son of God, we glorify him as a being every way competent to the discharge of this office; in consequence of that stupendous miracle by which he became incarnate, we honour him as Emmanuel, God with us.

*Finally.*—It is objected that the Father's giving his only begotten Son is always held forth in Scripture as the highest expression or effect of his love to men,—and that on account of the relation in which he stands to him, and the infinite paternal love he bears him as being his own proper Son; but if he is not his natural, essential, and eternal Son in the Godhead, the relation cannot be so near and endearing, nor the expression of love so great in giving him. This, as it has been replied, is a very void assertion. It implies that the relation and union of the eternal three in the one Godhead is not so near and endearing as that of Father and Son. Further: the objection implies that the Word as made flesh is not of such dignity, nor so near and dear to the Father, as if he had been begotten by him in his Divine

person from eternity; else, why may not the gift of him be as great an expression of love in the former as in the latter case? When our Lord says, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son," the meaning is that he permitted a glorious being, who was infinitely dear to him, to assume the nature of man; and then spared him not, but delivered him up to the death for us all. Not that he was actually his Son till he was born into this world; but being such in intention from all eternity, he might be so denominated. Our Lord did not mean to say that the Father's love was great, because the being whom he gave to be incarnate stood in the relation of Son to him. In point of fact, the love of the first person of the adorable Trinity, in permitting that the second should become incarnate, was in proportion to the ardent affection he bore to him. That must have been infinite, whether the second person stood in the relation of Son to him, or in some other unknown and ineffable relation; and therefore the gift of Christ was an infinite display of the Father's love. The language of our Lord may be thus paraphrased: "God so loved the world that he permitted a Divine and glorious being, a being infinitely dear to his heart, who was called his Son,"—on the same grounds on which he was called the Son of man before he actually came in the flesh, *i. e.* in anticipation of the work he was to perform,—permitted this being, I say, "to veil himself in human flesh, and to suffer the accursed death of the cross, for the salvation of all who should believe in him."

## LECTURE V

### THE TRINITY.

(CONTINUED.)

The preceding lectures on the subject, substance of:—proofs of the doctrine of the Trinity:—*First*: evidence in support of, derived from peculiar grammatical construction in the Hebrew Scriptures:—the doctrine of the Trinity alone meets the exigences of this peculiarity:—the efforts of Anti-Trinitarian writers to solve this anomaly shown to be insufficient:—Mr. Belsham's attempt to set aside the testimony of the Scriptures, examined:—Dr. J. Pye Smith's review of the entire subject, adopted.

§ 1. IN commencing my observations upon this fundamental article of the Christian faith, I propose *to explain* and *to establish* the doctrine brought before the view of the mind by the words “the Trinity.”

The rather lengthened, though I trust neither altogether useless nor uninteresting statements, which I have laid before you of an expository kind, have, I fondly hope, sufficiently accomplished the first of the objects I proposed to myself. You will have seen, I trust, with a tolerable degree of distinctness, the extent and the boundaries of our knowledge upon this subject. You will have been made to perceive how far the clear and unerring light of Divine revelation enables us to

proceed with a firm and steady step; and the point from whence, if we are not contented there to remain, we must wander on in doubt and darkness. You will have recognised the line of demarcation between that land on which the bright beams of revelation have played, and the *terra incognita* beyond—those regions of uncertainty and conjecture into which no one has entered, at any time, without losing himself, as well as all who attempted to follow him. The substance of our statements may be given in a very short compass.

There are in the Godhead three distinct hypostases, subsistences, distinctions, or persons, who are strictly co-eternal, and in all respects co-equal,—the titles Father, Son, and Holy Ghost being applied to them to mark out the relation they sustain to each other in the economy of salvation, and not any essential distinction which exists amongst the sacred three as subsistents in the Godhead, and far less any subordination of one to the other. What is the precise nature of the distinction which exists between the three persons of the Godhead as Divine persons,—for we believe that there is an essential distinction between them, though not the relations suggested by the terms Father, Son, and Holy Ghost;—the Scriptures, we think, nowhere reveal; and therefore it is useless, and indeed improper, to speculate about it. Nor do they explain in what mysterious manner the sacred three are united. They merely affirm the fact that in some ineffable way they are united, so that our Jehovah Elohim is but one Jehovah. His unity does not preclude the plurality we ascribe to him, nor does his plurality destroy his unity; but what is the precise sense of the personality and the unity of God we are totally inadequate to say,—both these matters, to a very considerable extent at least, being in that *terra incog-*

*nita* into which we do well not to enter. I now proceed—

§ 2. SECONDLY,—to establish the doctrine of the Trinity. And here it will be well to bear in mind the precise point we have to prove, and the nature of the evidence which is required to establish it.

The point to be proved is, that in the unity of the Divine essence there is a plurality of persons, and that this plurality is restricted to three. The evidence which is required to establish it is that which is necessary to support a claim of personality set up on behalf of an agent in any other case. How do we know of any agency that it is personal agency, but by the historian's description of personal properties and qualities to the agent? We find no difficulty in general to ascertain whether an author is speaking of a blind unconscious principle, or of a living and active being. If the attributes and properties of a person be ascribed to the agent, and that in circumstances which preclude all reasonable suspicion that the description was intended to be considered a merely figurative one, we feel assured that it is a person of whom the author speaks. In consistency with this rule of decision, it follows that if personal properties are, in the Scriptures, ascribed to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,—if the Father is asserted to be *God*, and the Son *God*, and the Holy Ghost *God*,—and if the inspired volume affirms that there are not three Gods, but one God,—if this, I say, be the case, it follows that there is a plurality of persons in the one undivided essence, or that the doctrine of the Trinity is true.

Now there are two methods by which the doctrine of a plurality, or of a Trinity of persons (for the only question is whether there are three or one), in the

Godhead may be established. We may take those passages which prove it directly, by ascribing plurality to the Godhead; or we may take those which prove it indirectly, by showing separately of the Son and the Holy Ghost that they, as well as the Father, are Divine persons, and consequently that there is a Trinity of persons in the one undivided essence.

This latter mode of proof is, perhaps, more full and complete and satisfactory than the other. Yet it opens to us a field upon which we must not now enter. It remains to be trodden upon when—in a future part of our course—the subjects of the Divinity of Christ and the Divinity and personality of the Holy Ghost come before us. At present, I must confine myself to what may be considered the more direct proofs of the doctrine of the Trinity, or to those passages which evidently point to a plurality of persons in the Divine essence. I must beg you, however, to bear carefully in mind that this does by no means exhaust the subject; and to be upon your guard against the unfairness of our adversaries, who are ready to represent the comparatively few passages which directly assert this important doctrine as the only proof we can adduce in support of it.

§ 3. The *First* proof of the doctrine of the Trinity I would draw from the use of plural nouns denoting the Divine Being, connected with the fact that these nouns, or some of them, are in agreement with adjectives and pronouns and verbs, sometimes of the singular, and at others in the plural number. A few instances of each it will be proper to adduce. The most usual appellation of the Deity in the original Scriptures of the Old Testament is אלהים *Elohim*, or, as commonly read by those who reject the points, *Aleim*, which is constantly translated God; but it is the regular plural of

אלוה *Eloah*, or אלה *Elah*, which also occurs, though much less frequently than in the plural form, and is always translated in the same manner. It is asserted, by an eminent biblical critic, that the singular form, *Eloah*, occurs twice in the hymn of Mosés, several times in the prophets, forty times in the Book of Job, and in the other books sixteen times; while the plural, *Elohim*, occurs above two thousand five hundred times.\*

The following are instances in which *Elohim* is used in connection with singular verbs and pronouns, &c. I shall mention only a few; but you will have seen that it is the ordinary construction through the whole Hebrew Bible. In the very first verse of the sacred volume, we meet with this plural noun in construction with a singular verb. "In the beginning *Elohim* created" (*creavit Dii*) "the heavens and the earth." And in the concise history of the creation alone, the expression *Bara Elohim*—the Gods created—is used above thirty times.

In the second verse of the second chapter, we read that on the seventh day God ended—or had ended, as it should be rendered, for the work of creation was completed on the sixth day,—“God [*Elohim*] ended *his* work which *he* had made; and *he* rested on the seventh day from all *his* work which *he* had made.” Here the plural noun is connected with pronouns expressed or understood in the singular number. I need not, however, give any more instances of this kind, as it is, as you have seen, the common construction employed on this subject.

The following are a few of the many instances in which the same plural noun (*Elohim*) is used in apposition with verbs, pronouns, and adjectives in the plural number. “It came to pass,” says Abraham, in Gen.

\* Simonis, *Lex. ab Eichhorn*, p. 119.

xx. 13, "when God caused me to wander," *vagari me fecerunt Dii*. In the thirty-fifth chapter of the same book, and the seventh verse, we are told that Jacob built an altar at Luz, "and called the place El-beth-el, because there God appeared unto him,"—literally, there the Elohim were revealed (*revelati sunt*) to him. Joshua xxiv. 19: "And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the Lord: for he is an holy God," *Elohim kedoshim—Dii sancti*. Psalm lviii. 11: "Verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth," *Elohim shofetim*.

There are yet a few passages in which the plural Elohim is put in construction with plural pronouns, and which are so important and remarkable as to deserve a separate notice. In Gen. i. 26, we read, "And God said, Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every-creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." Gen. iii. 22: "And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of *us*, to know good and evil." Gen. xi. 6, 7: "And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let *us* go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."

To the instances just mentioned, it may be added that the same grammatical anomaly presents itself when the word Elohim is not used as a name of God. Thus we read in the Book of Psalms, "Israel shall rejoice in his Maker,"—literally, in his Creators. Isaiah liv. 5: "For thy Creator is thy husband,"—both of these words are plural. It may be stated also, that though Elohim is



generally supposed to be the only one of the Divine names which appears in the plural number, many distinguished scholars have maintained that *Adonai* (Sovereign) and *Shaddai* (the All-sufficient) are plurals of an obsolete and an unusual form. The former of these words is of the same family with *Adon* (Lord, master, sovereign), which, both in its singular and in its plural form, is applied to the Divine Being, as well as to human possessors of authority.\*

§ 4. Such is the state of the fact with reference to the names by which the great Eternal is distinguished in the sacred volume. It involves in it a grammatical anomaly which has no parallel in any known language. How is it to be accounted for? And here, I observe, *in the First place*, that the doctrine of the Trinity, or the statements which we have given concerning three Divine subsistents in the one undivided essence, affords a natural, an easy, and a perfect solution of the difficulty. If there be indeed three persons in the Deity, how can we wonder to find this great and ineffable being described by a plural term, and to see this term put in agreement with plural verbs, and adjectives, and pronouns! And on the other hand, if these three persons constitute but one God, what matter of surprise is it that Elohim should be found in construction with singular verbs, and adjectives, and pronouns! If it had been the actual intention of the sacred writers to teach the doctrine of a Trinity in Unity, could they have taken a readier, and in so far as the mere names by which the Divine Being is distinguished, a more effectual method of making known their sentiments? Singular verbs and adjectives and pronouns are used to

\* [Vide *Scripture Testimony*, vol. i., pp. 468, 469, Third Edition; pp. 311, 312, vol. i., Fourth Edition.]

exhibit that great truth of natural religion—that God is one, in opposition to the absurd and licentious polytheism of the nations by which they were surrounded; and, on the other hand, plural names are employed, and these names are put in connection with plural attributives, to show that, while God is one in every sense in which unity can be considered a perfection, there is yet in the unknown essence of the Deity a plurality, not of separate beings, but of hypostases, subsistences, or persons, forming one of the unique properties of that essence, and distinguishing the mode of his existence from that of the existence of any and all dependent beings. Indeed, as it has been well observed, “there is scarcely any method of speaking from which a plurality in Deity may be inferred that is not used either by the Hebrew legislator, or by the other inspired writers in various parts of the Old Testament.” And after quoting some of the passages to which I have referred you, the same writer proceeds,—“To these passages, if we add that remarkable one from Ecclesiastes, ‘Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth,’ and the predominant use of the words Jehovah Elohim, *i. e.* the Lord thy Gods, (the word Jehovah implying the unity of the Divine essence, and Elohim a plurality in that unity,) and, as I may add, that very striking declaration on which we build our faith in the unity of God, ‘Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our Elohim’ (our Gods) ‘is one Jehovah,’—we must allow that nothing can be more plainly marked than this doctrine in the ancient Scriptures.” We may add, with advantage to the above statement, an observation of Dr. Wardlaw, with reference to one of the passages which were quoted a short time ago. “That while in the declaration of the Divine purpose concerning the creation of man, terms are employed indicative of plurality, the style of unity is resumed in the record of the

execution of that purpose. 'God said, Let us make man in our image;' while the historian, writing under the direction of the Holy Spirit, informs us that he 'created man in *his* own image, in the image of God created he him.'" The force of the above reasoning will be greatly increased, by the recollection of the fact that all this language, so directly indicative of a plurality in the Godhead, should be found in a theological system in which the unity of the Godhead was the leading principle,—that the term *Elohim*, as a part of the language indicative of plurality, should be constantly used to designate the one and only God; and this in the language—to adopt the admirable statements of a modern author—of the patriarchs and prophets, who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." It is not a little remarkable that such a circumstance should exist in the sacred books of a people who were separated from all other nations for this express object, that they should bear a public and continual protest against polytheism; a people whose whole system of religious, political, and domestic usages was calculated, with consummate prudence and wisdom, to be a perpetual preservation from polytheistic notions; a people who were charged by the eternal God to destroy every statue, structure, and grove that might recall the memory of idolatrous rites, and to extirpate everything that could be extirpated which had been associated with idolatry, or might be converted into an instrument of its revival or of its slightest palliation; who were enjoined to abolish every name of city, village, or place, which was compounded with the name of a heathen deity, and to substitute new appellations; who were not even to pronounce these names unless necessity compelled. Is it not, we may well say, a little remarkable that in the sacred books of such a people—books whose very words, in many cases at least,

were selected and dictated by the inspiration of Jehovah—the ordinary name and style of the only living and true God should be in a plural form? Did some strange and insuperable necessity lie in the way? Was the language so poor that it could furnish no other term? or if so, could not the wisdom of inspiration have suggested a new appellation, and for ever abolished the hazardous word? None of these reasons existed. The language was rich and copious. The names of the Deity in general and constant use were more numerous than in either of the beautiful languages of classical antiquity, or in the most cultivated tongues of modern Europe. Besides that glorious and fearful name Jehovah, the appropriated and unique style of the true God, and besides other unexceptionable names, there was, as we have before observed, the singular form (Eloah) of the very word in question. There was no shadow of necessity, difficulty, or even inducement, for the adoption of a phraseology which, on the denial of the Trinity, every candid mind must confess can with difficulty, if at all, be defended from the charge of pernicious example, and very dangerous tendency. The fact is so remarkable that I do not see how, on any supposition but that of a Trinity of persons in the Godhead, it can be accounted for. Here is a plural noun most generally used to denote the true object of worship, *i. e.* a noun or word adapted to teach polytheism, in a book the very object of which is to destroy polytheism. And lest it should be said that the sacred historian has attempted to guard against the danger of misleading his readers, by his polytheistic manner of describing the Deity—to guard against this danger (though it is a wild supposition that an inspired writer should unnecessarily use language against the danger of which it is necessary to guard) by con-

joining this plural noun with singular verbs and adjectives and pronouns, we find him using this very plural name in connection with verbs plural, and adjectives plural, and pronouns plural. It is this, as Dr. Pyc Smith justly observes, which forms the great peculiarity of our question. It is this upon which the chief stress of the argument is laid, for an allusion or implication in favour of the doctrine of a Divine plurality. Why should a plural name have been used at all unnecessarily, as it must have been, if there be not a Trinity of persons in the Godhead? and especially, how comes it to pass that this plural name is found in apposition with plural attributives in a book designed to overturn and destroy polytheism? If there be indeed *τρεις ὑπόστασεις ἐν μιᾷ οὐσίᾳ* [*i. e.* three subsistences (*hypostases*) in one nature (*ousia*)], it was necessary that the doctrine should be revealed, though at the risk of its being perversely considered as favouring polytheism; but if there be not three persons in one God, everything is natural and intelligible. I do not see, as Dr. Smith has said, how it is possible to rescue the phraseology of the inspired writers from the charge of pernicious example and dangerous tendency; or the writers themselves—or rather the spirit of God—from that of great rashness in having adopted it. And while the doctrine of the Trinity affords an easy and full solution of the facts to which I have now called your attention, I observe—

§ 5. *Secondly*,—that the efforts to solve this grammatical anomaly by Anti-Trinitarian writers are weak and insufficient. “The word *Elohim*,” says Mr. Belsham, “which is commonly translated God, is in the original in the plural form, and is thought by some to imply a plurality of persons in the Divine essence.” This he pronounces a trifling argument, and for the following reasons:—

1. In all languages, it is a common anomaly for words of a plural form to have a singular signification. This Dr. Smith—from whose excellent statements. I shall borrow the major part of the following remarks,—this Dr. Smith justly denies. In all languages, perhaps, he admits that there may be words whose singular has gone into disuse, and whose plural form stands in the common lexicons, and is rendered by a singular term in Latin or in English; but even in these words the rational philologist may trace an original and designed plurality.\* Or, I will add, there must have been such an original and designed plurality, whether we can trace it or not. I hold it to be a self-evident absurdity, to suppose that a plural word should have been originally employed to denote an object, which was conceived at the time of the primary application of the term to be in no respect plural, but in all respects singular. Whatever was the primary application of the term Elohim, it must have had an object, in common with every other plural name, which was conceived to be plural by the individual who so applied it. It would be said, perhaps, by Mr. Belsham, that it was first applied to the false gods of the heathen, who, being many, must have a plural appellative; and was afterwards used by Moses to denote the true God, though but one, in compliance with the phraseology of the reigning superstition. This supposition however is, I observe, first, negatived by the reasoning which I have laid before you,—reasoning which goes to show the utter impossibility of supposing that Moses, when writing against polytheism, and legislating against it, and endeavouring by all means to subvert it, would have used the language of polytheism

\* [*Vide* *ibid.*, *ut supra*, sect. xxxiv., Third Edition; but xxxv. in the Fourth Edition. This discrepancy is owing to a misprint in the former.]

without necessity. But, secondly, I observe it rests on an assumed basis. It supposes that the Deity was not known by his name Elohim till after the prevalence of polytheism. The true religion existed in the world before superstition and idolatry, for they are corruptions of it. The true God was known before false gods were worshipped, for he revealed himself to Adam in paradise. Now the question is, Did he reveal himself by name to the father of the human race, or without a name? The former I cannot but think all but certain. When Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field, is it not more than probable that he would inquire concerning the name of that ineffable and glorious Being from whom he had derived his existence? What good ground is there for assuming that the word Elohim was unknown to Adam—that Jehovah did not make a distinct revelation of it to him? I can conceive of none. At any rate, the opposers of the doctrine of the Trinity are reduced to the following dilemma. Either Jehovah did reveal himself to the human race by the name Elohim, or he did not. If the latter be the case, if the word Elohim were not a revealed appellation of the Deity at the time when Moses committed his history to writing, so that he was under no obligation to use it, how came he to employ it at all, seeing that it was likely to support rather than subvert polytheism? If, on the other hand, the former be the case, if God revealed himself to the fathers of the human race by the name in question, he must, on the principles just laid down, have done so; because in the unity of the Divine essence there is a plurality of persons.

Mr. Belsham adds—2. That the word Elohim is almost uniformly used in apposition with singular verbs.

He means it to be inferred from this, that such being the case, there is no reason to consider it as affording an argument in support of the Trinity. But this, as Dr. Smith observes, is a part of the very case to be accounted for. It is not so with the words of a plural form in other languages, which, Mr. Belsham says, have a singular signification: they are always put in apposition with plural attributives. What then is the origin of this remarkable anomaly? Yet this is not the whole of what deserves notice with reference to the subject. If we were to consider the construction of Elohim with singular verbs, &c. as a Hebrew idiom of which no other account can be given than that so we find it, what can we say upon the other part of the case—the construction with plural attributives? Of this there are, as we have seen, several instances; a few of which are so remarkable that, though they have been mentioned already, I must beg to direct your attention to them again. They are the instances of the use of the *first* person plural in reference to the Divine Being. “And Elohim said, Let us make man in our image,” &c. “And Jehovah Elohim said, Behold, the man is become as one of us.” “Come, we will go down, and there we will confound their language.” “Also I heard the voice of the Lord Adonai, saying, Whom shall I send, and who shall go for us?” Here a plural noun is constructed with plural attributives,—a circumstance which, by the implied confession of Mr. Belsham himself, is more difficult to reconcile with the dogmas of Socinianism. And the circumstance is so remarkable, the tendency of such language to perpetuate or to palliate polytheism is so direct and apparent, that without some powerfully impelling motive—some such motive as would be involved in the belief of the doctrine of the



Trinity,—it is impossible to conceive that a legislator who required new appellations to be given to those cities and villages whose names had been compounded with those of heathen deities—not allowing the old appellations to be pronounced—would have thought of permitting a polytheistic name to be given to the very object of their worship, connecting it with attributives at the same time of every kind, and in almost every conceivable manner. Yet such is the case. And this is a phenomenon to be accounted for by those who reject the doctrine of the Trinity. Let us then look, for a moment, at the methods they have adopted to solve the difficulty, as the insufficiency of the reasons they assign are powerfully adapted to strengthen our conviction of the correctness of the Trinitarian exposition. With reference to the first example, it has been said—

*First*,—that angels are here associated with Jehovah. “But surely,” says an able writer, “nothing can be more unnatural and unworthy than such a supposition. What! the only living and true God sharing with his creatures his peculiar glory! consulting with them in terms of equality about a work which is necessarily the exclusive prerogative of infinite power!—even that God, who so often claims this work—the work of creation—as entirely his own, and as distinguishing him from all pretenders to Divinity! and who so solemnly declares that he will not give his glory to another! Such an idea is too flagrantly inconsistent to merit any lengthened exposure. It may be added, however, that the Scriptures nowhere give any countenance to the notion of angels having been employed in the creation of man, or of man’s having been formed in the image of angels.

*Secondly.*—Jehovah has been considered as using on this occasion the language of majesty, according to the practice of earthly potentates. One would be apt to think, as it has been observed, the converse of this proposition more probable; and that if Moses employed the plural number as the peculiar style of Divine dignity, it had afterwards, in the presumption of pride and vanity, been assumed by the rulers of the world. But, in the first place, it is not consistent with fact, that the Supreme Being is ever represented in Scripture as using this particular style. It is, indeed, quite the contrary. In the most sublime and solemn portions of holy writ, in which the Divine Majesty of heaven and earth is introduced as speaking, the singular number is uniformly used. Neither was it, secondly, in point of fact, the style of kings of the earth themselves in the time of Moses; nor, indeed, can any instance of it be produced from the whole Bible.\* Thirdly, if it were conceded, which it is not, that it was customary, at the time when Moses committed his history to writing, for earthly monarchs to use plural appellatives, and that this circumstance would account for the employment of the term Elohim, it might still be contended that that custom, granting it to exist, would utterly fail to explain the very peculiar language we are now considering. When do we ever find an earthly monarch consulting with himself—addressing proposals to himself? Even in places where monarchs do speak of themselves in the plural number, the language to which I now refer—

\* It may be observed that the language of Pharoah, king of Egypt, as recorded by Moses in the Book of Genesis, is always in the singular number: "I am Pharoah;" and "See I have set thee over all the land of Egypt." And Ezra records that the king of Persia wrote in the same style long afterwards: "I [Darius] make a decree." (Ezra vi. 8.)

"Let *us* make man," &c.—is still without a parallel. "Behold, the man is become as one of *us*," &c. What can such language mean, when considered as the language of the one God, unless it be intended to denote a plurality of persons in the Godhead? An earthly king might use such an expression to comprehend his fellow kings, all who possessed the same rank and authority with himself. But Jehovah stands alone. As the Sovereign of the universe, he has no compeers—no fellow Gods. No potentate among men could use an expression like this in reference to himself alone, unless under the influence of a disordered mind.

§ 6. I cannot, however, dismiss this subject without adverting to the attempt of Mr. Belsham to neutralize the argument in support of the doctrine of the Trinity derived from the passages we are now considering. It is by far the most ingenious and rational mode of silencing a stubborn text which I have seen; but it is, I verily believe, entirely sophistical, notwithstanding." "The plural number is sometimes used," says he, "when God is introduced as speaking. (Gen. i. 26, xi. 7.) Answer: this is nothing more than the author's dramatic way of writing: We are not to suppose that God actually said to the waters, 'Bring forth abundantly;' or to the birds and fishes, 'Be fruitful and multiply.' Perhaps the expression 'Let there be' may denote energy, and 'Let us make' may denote forethought; and upon this occasion such language might be employed by the writer to intimate that man is the noblest work of God, the most distinguished production of Divine power and wisdom in the world." The substance of Dr. Smith's reply to this objection, which is in my judgment complete and triumphant, is as follows. "We need not be told that the dramatic way of writing, by dialogue and direct

speeches, characterizes the style of the Hebrew Scriptures, and of the most ancient examples which we possess of profane narratives. But how can the Inquirer affirm that the passages in question are nothing more than this dramatic form of composition? “Would it not have been equally dramatic, had the inspired author written, ‘*I will make, I will go down, I will confound*?’ That which these speeches possess *more* than the dramatic form,” *i.e.* plurality, “is the whole of the subject to be considered. A more gross instance,” adds Dr. Smith, “of the *non causa pro causa*, it would be difficult to find. Neither do we suppose that the Deity actually made use of vocal speech in the exercises of his creative energy, or on the other occasions referred to. This style was undoubtedly adopted as the most conformable with the fresh and lively sensibility of mankind in the first periods of literary composition; and it partakes of the anthropopathia which the spirit of inspiration condescended so largely to employ in the Old Testament writings. The language and manner was doubtless the best adapted for conveying to the men of the earliest ages the simple truth, that the Deity brought into existence the first human being, and ancestor of all human kind, in a state of holiness and happiness, by the immediate exertion of almighty power. But this is foreign to the question, which is plainly and only, Why is the plural pronoun used when the singular,” according to Socinian views, “was required by the subject, and would have been not only equally dramatic, but indeed more terse and vigorous and striking? The Inquirer,” continues Dr. Smith, “does not even attempt a reply to the question, except by some vague and gratuitous conjectures; for he would scarcely deign to accept of the fancy of a council held with the angels, which however he cites from Geddes and the Rabbinical inter-

preters."\* "The perplexity felt by the Jews of the middle 'ages"—who, not admitting the doctrine of the Trinity, were as much puzzled by these expressions as Dr. Geddes and Mr. Belsham—"appears," as Baxtorf tells us, "by their inventing the following childish story. Rabbi Samuel bar Nachman said that Moses, when in writing the law he was come to the place where he was by Divine dictation to write 'Let us make man,' paused, and replied to God, 'Lord of the world, why dost thou afford an occasion for error, with respect to thy most simple unity?' But that the Lord answered Moses, 'Write thou so; and he that desires to err, let him err.'"

§ 7. Dr. Smith closes his admirable dissertation on this subject with the following words; with which, as they so fully express my own sentiments, I conclude.

"After the closest attention that I can give to all the parts of the case, the impression on my mind is favourable to the opinion that this peculiarity of idiom originated in a design to intimate a plurality in the nature of the one God; and that thus, in connection with other circumstances calculated to suggest the same conception, it was intended to excite and prepare the minds of men for the more full declaration of this unsearchable mystery, which 'should in proper time be granted. This supposition implies, of course, a Divine direction in the origin, or in the application of the term; and the intention which we suppose was merely to intimate, not to give an absolute declaration." Now such a system of intimations we know existed under the earlier dispensations of revealed truth, with regard to various subjects, the clear manifestation of which was reserved for the brightness of the gospel day. "Under such a system, it would be a necessary consequence that the design would

\* *Vide* *ibid.*, *ut supra*.

be understood, and the intention apprehended, in various degrees, according to the piety, intelligence, and attention of different persons; and, in all probability, the careless majority would pay no attention to it at all. The prophets themselves, by whom the spirit of Christ testified, did not fully comprehend the meaning of their own declarations: of course, they could not be acquainted with the full and precise bearings of the very terms and expressions which they were directed to use. This will account for the degree of difficulty which hangs upon the question, and for the resistance opposed to any Trinitarian argument from it by the modern Jews.”\*

\* [These extracts from Dr. Pye Smith’s *Scripture Testimony* are not in every case *verbatim*; and this remark applies to several extracts in subsequent lectures also.]

## LECTURE VI.

---

### THE TRINITY.

(CONTINUED.)

Old and New Testament Scriptures, in reference to this important doctrine, throw mutual light on each other:—the form of baptism, a proof:—objections to this proof answered:—a proof of, derived from the form of the apostolic benediction:—from the language of John, Rev. i. 4, 5:—passages that afford auxiliary or indirect proof:—Isaiah xlviii. 16, examined, proof afforded by:—Isaiah lxi. 1, the evidence in support of this doctrine:—the threefold repetition of the name of God, the doctrine of the Trinity, the basis of:—passages in which a clear distinction is observed between two persons, each of whom called God:—concluding observations.

§ 1. I HAVE already directed your attention to one very powerful argument in support of the great doctrine of the Trinity, which may be derived from the Old Testament Scriptures. The same part of the inspired records supplies us with other evidence in confirmation of our faith; but it strikes me that this evidence will be more advantageously considered after we have examined some of the statements of the New Testament, in which this fundamental truth of our holy religion is more fully developed. The clear and splendid announcements of evangelists and apostles have thrown a backward light

upon the prophets who are seen behind them; and the language of David and Isaiah becomes more intelligible after we have listened to the firmer and fuller tones of Matthew and John, and Peter and Paul.

§ 2. The *Second* proof of this doctrine, then, I derive from the form of baptism prescribed by our Lord, in the commission which he gave to his apostles immediately before he left the world, and which is recorded in Matt. xxviii. 19: "Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

That the term Father is used to designate Jehovah is admitted by our opponents: the only question is, who or what we are to understand by the Son and the Holy Ghost. On the very first aspect of this text, it appears most unreasonable, says one, to suppose that the one true God is here associated with two of his creatures; or with one of his creatures, and an attribute, or energy, or mode of operation. It appears to me that the simple statement of such an interpretation should be sufficient to ensure its immediate and unqualified rejection. In any circumstances, such an association is inconceivable. Yet the unreasonableness is increased, when the words are considered as the terms of an initiatory rite, connected with a religion in which all worship but what is addressed to the one Jehovah is, under every form, either expressed or implied, so decidedly and totally condemned. The apostles were to teach the Gentiles, that they should turn from those vanities which they worshipped to the living God; and those who received their instructions they were to baptize, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. What then must have occurred to their hearers and converts from the use of these words, but that they were now, instead



of the multitude of their former deities, to adore and serve the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, as the one living and true God? Baptism was to be administered in the name of all the three, in the very same way; and surely, therefore, there is the fairest reason to conclude, in the same sense. It is not baptizing them in the name of the Father and of his two servants, the Son and the Holy Ghost; nor even baptizing them in the name of God, and of Christ, and of the Spirit; but without the slightest intimation or symptom of any change in the meaning of the expression, in its application to one of the persons more than another, "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The very same kind, and the very same degree, of honour and reverence, that are paid in this rite to one, are paid, as far as language can indicate the meaning of the speaker, alike to all.

This reasoning holds good, it will be observed, if the present rendering of the preposition *eis* [in] be allowed to stand; and if it should be conceded that the words are to be considered as a Divine directory to baptize in the name, *i. e.* by the authority of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Is such an association to be conceived of for a moment? I think not. There is good reason to think, however, that this is not the amount of what is included in the text. To ascertain this, it will be necessary to inquire what is meant by the term name, and whether *eis* [in] is properly rendered or not. With reference to the former, it has been well said, that the Scripture uses the phrase, "the name of God," as a compendious formula to denote his infinite and absolute perfection, his fulness of all possible excellences, the total of all Jehovah's awful and lovely attributes—so far as they

can be known by finite intelligences. Passages to this effect are abundant. "And what wilt thou do unto thy great name?"\* "Jehovah our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!"† He "led them by the right hand of Moses, . . . . . to make to himself an everlasting name."‡ "And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power, and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth."§ "I wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted"|| in the eyes of the nations. "For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it: for how should my name be polluted?"¶ And the Lord God proclaimed his name, *i. e.* his character to Moses, as "The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth."\*\* To make known this name to mortals was a chief object of our Lord's labours and instructions. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." It was by making known this name, by exhibiting to the world all the perfections of the Divine character, that the Lord Jesus Christ glorified his Father. And before he left the world, he prayed that the Father would glorify him in the same manner, *i. e.* by the manifestation of his name, or by the unveiling of the same moral and spiritual excellences, the same absolute and infinite perfection, in the person and character of the Son of God. When he issued the instructions to which I am now directing your attention, all power had been given to him in heaven and in earth—the Father had heard and accepted his prayer—he was to be glorified by the

\* Josh. vii. 9.

† Psalm viii. 1 and 9.

‡ Isaiah lxiii. 12.

§ Exod. ix. 16; see also Rom. ix. 17.

|| Ezek. xx. 9.

¶ Isaiah xlvi. 11.

\*\* Exod. xxxiv. 6.

manifestation of his name; and therefore he said to the apostles, "Go ye forth into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, baptizing them in the name," or unto the name, or with regard to the name, for so *eis* should be translated,—baptizing them unto the name, *i. e.* with a view to the glory of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

"The obvious purport of this passage," says Dr. Smith, "is to describe the intention and design of baptism to be a devotional consecration to God, who is manifested by his great and holy name, the display of his perfections and glories. It is likewise obvious that this name is attributed equally to the Son and the Holy Spirit as to the Father." "The name," says Dr. Jamieson, "is evidently something in which they all agree, for it is spoken of as one,"—in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. "It is natural to think that, if our Lord had not meant to exhibit his essence as the same with that of the Father, he would have repeated the words 'into the name.'" He observes this method when there is unspeakably less danger of mistake.\* Declaring his work as Mediator, he says, "I will write upon him the name (*τὸ ὄνομα*) of my God, and the name (*τὸ ὄνομα*) of the city of my God." (Rev. iii. 12.)\* And if in Christian baptism we are devoted or dedicated unto the name, *i. e.* the glory of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, how can it be doubted that the Son and the Holy Ghost are Divine persons as well as the Father? In the very nature of the case, this dedication implies, in the being who is the object of it, capacity to receive the thing or person dedicated, ability to protect, and a right and power to confer all the good

\* Vide *Vindication of the Doctrine of Scripture and of the Primitive Faith*, vol. i., p. 419.

that is contemplated in the act of dedication. "The moral use of baptism is also intimated by its being 'the stipulation of a good conscience towards God.'\* Now the existence of a stipulation implies the presence, or in some way the knowledge and acceptance, of the person to whom the engagement is made. It supposes then, in this case, the presence or cognizance of the Son and of the Spirit equally with that of the Father."† For these reasons, I think the language of our Lord, in the passage we are now considering, contains decided proof of a plurality of persons in the Godhead, and that these persons are three.

§ 3. I will just glance at some of the objections which have been urged against this argument in support of the Trinity, before I pass to another argument in vindication of the doctrine.

OBJECTION 1.—It is objected that we have no evidence that these words were intended as a formulary of the rite, since the instances of Christian baptism on record in the Acts are all unto the name of Christ only.

*Answer 1.*—It is not necessary to suppose that they were designed to prescribe the exact form of Christian baptism. They are beyond all question a *description* of Christian baptism, deduced from its reference, intention, and use; and it is on this revealed *description* that we build our confidence in the doctrine of the Trinity. The doctrinal inference from the terms is not affected

\* 1 Peter iii. 21.

† ["*The stipulation of a good conscience,*" &c. (συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς ἐπερώρημα εἰς Θεόν), rendered in our version "the answer," &c. But the word "ἐπερώρημα" was used as a term, in the Greek Treatises on the Civil Law, to denote a *stipulation*." (*Grotius in loco.*) Hence the above rendering. *Vide* Dr. Smith's *Scripture Testimony*, vol. iii., p. 17, Third Edition; vol. ii., p. 179, Fourth Edition.]

by the question, whether they were or were not designed to be a formulary for the administration of the rite.

*Answer 2.*—The various terms, in which the fact that certain individuals had submitted to baptism is announced in the Acts, prove that the inspired writer did not intend to describe the particular form used in administering baptism, but merely to state that they were initiated into a profession of the Christian religion. In short, this language in the Acts may be considered as a short mode of describing baptism, in which a part only of what was said and done was put for the whole; in the same manner as the celebration of the Lord's Supper is described by the breaking of bread. It is sometimes said merely that a certain individual or individuals were baptized. Now we might as fairly conclude from hence that no Divine name at all was used by the administrator, as that the name of the Son only was employed in the passages referred to.

*Answer 3.*—Though it may not be necessary to prove that the words we are now considering were intended by our Lord as a prescribed formulary for the administration of Christian baptism, there can be little or no doubt that they are such. Since our Lord commanded the disciples to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, I can, I acknowledge, conceive few things more certain than that that is not Christian baptism which is not administered in the name of the Sacred Trinity. The baptisms mentioned in the Acts do not run counter to this assertion; because, as we have seen, though they prove that baptism was administered in the name of Christ, they do not prove that it was administered in his name *only*; while there is one passage in that same book which renders it all but indisputable that the name of all the persons of the

Godhead was mentioned in the celebration of the rite. It is recorded in the three first verses of the nineteenth chapter: "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus; and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized?" The *eis τί, unto what*, seem plainly to refer to the words of institution, *eis τὸ ὄνομα*—"unto the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Now if it had not been the practice of the primitive disciples to baptize in the name of the Holy Ghost, and of course in the name of the other persons in the Trinity, how could Paul have felt any astonishment that, though baptized, as he supposed them, they had not heard—to use their own language—whether there be any Holy Ghost? I have no doubt, therefore, that the words of our Lord were intended to describe what is essential in the mode of administering baptism.

OBJECTION 2.—If it be admitted that Christian baptism is to be administered in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, it does not follow that the Son and Holy Ghost are persons at all,—far less Divine persons. "The language," says Dr. Lardner, "may be paraphrased thus: 'Go ye therefore into all the world, and teach, or disciple, all nations; baptizing them into the profession of faith in, and an obligation to obey, the doctrine taught by Christ, with authority from God the Father, and confirmed by the Holy Ghost.'"

*Answer.*—This paraphrase, as it is falsely called, is little less than absurd. Besides the unreasonable force put upon the construction of the words, we are pre-

sented with the incongruous combination of the name of the Deity, the name of a doctrine, and the name of certain historical facts. "The phrase into [or unto] the name," says Dr. Smith, "is properly applicable to persons only. Baptism into the name of a doctrine, or of a system of doctrines," or into the name of an energy or operation, "is a phrase unexampled in the language of Scripture; and it presents an incongruous idea. The expression manifestly requires that the name of the Son, and that of the Spirit, must be understood not of the doctrine of the one, and the influence of the other, but with the same relation as the name of the Father, *i. e.* with relation to a personal subsistence." And if the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are personal subsistences, they must be equal in dignity, and power, and glory; for baptism is to be administered with an equal view to the honour of all.

OBJECTION 3.—If to be baptized in the name of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, proves that the Son and the Holy Ghost are Divine persons, by parity of reasoning the declaration of the apostle concerning the Israelites, that they were all baptized unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea, must prove that Moses was a Divine person.

*Answer 1.*—The expressions are not the same, inasmuch as the Israelites are not said to have been baptized into or unto the name of Moses: now it is on the employment of this word that so much stress has been laid in the preceding argument. The name of God is only another phrase for the Divine glories of his character. This name is attributed to the Son and Holy Ghost. To be baptized into or unto the name of the Son implies a solemn dedication to his service.

*Answer 2.*—"There is good reason for regarding the

word Moses as being here put metonymically, for the institutes or the religion of Moses, as it occurs in the subsequent epistle.\* When Moses is read the veil is upon their hearts. Thus understood, there is no difficulty at all in the passage. The Israelites were baptized unto or into the institutes or the religion of Moses; or, in other words, they were brought under a solemn obligation to obey all that God enjoined them by the ministry of Moses."

*Answer 3.*—There are respectable grounds for the opinion that, by an ascertained though not frequent Hebraism, the preposition is put to denote the instrumental cause: they were baptized by Moses; as if it had been *διὰ τοῦ Μωϋσέως*. Thus the ancient Syriac translates the passage, using the phrase common to the Aramæan dialects, "by the hand of Moses."

§ 4. The *Third* argument in support of the Trinity is derived from the form of apostolical benediction in the conclusion of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen." "That this form of blessing includes in it a prayer," says Dr. Wardlaw, "it would be a waste of words to prove." To whom, then, is this prayer addressed? Had it been simply said, 'The love of God be with you all: Amen,'—no one, I suppose, would have hesitated to say, that when the apostle thus expressed himself, he presented in his heart a petition to the Father of Mercies for the manifestations of his love to the believers at Corinth. On what principle of criticism, then, are we to interpret the expression, 'The grace or favour of the Lord Jesus Christ,' an expression so precisely the same in form, in a different sense, in a sense

\* See 2 Cor. iii. 15.



that does not imply Jesus Christ's being the object of a similar inward aspiration? And the same question might be asked with regard to the remaining phrase, 'the communion of the Holy Ghost.' It should be considered, too, that the Corinthians, to whom he thus wrote, would at once associate the phraseology employed with the terms of the initiatory of baptism, to which they had submitted on their entrance into the Christian church. They would perceive the coincidence between the one and the other, and would understand the apostle as addressing himself, in their behalf, to the three persons in whose name they had, upon his own instruction, been baptized. I would only further ask, at present, how we can suppose an inspired man, or even a man of common understanding, to recommend, in the solemn language of prayer, his converts and brethren to the love of God, and to the favour and communion of two of his creatures? or to the love of God, the favour of a man, and the communion of an attribute, or influence, or energy? and that, too, not only in terms so exactly alike, but with a precedence given to the creature in the order of address?"\*

§ 5. The *Fourth* argument in support of this doctrine we derive from that very remarkable language of the apostle John in the commencement of the book of Revelation. "John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth." These words are in the form of a devout wish for blessings which are appropriated to the Deity to bestow. It is to all

\* *Socinian Controversy*, pp. 18, 19, Second Edition.

intents and purposes a *prayer*. Mr. Belsham makes the following remark, with a view to neutralize the testimony of this and other passages. "Wishes and prayers are very far from being terms of the same import. A wish is merely the expression of desire. Prayer is that expression addressed to one who is supposed to be present, and able to accomplish it. And if this person, though not sensibly, is believed to be really present, prayer is an act of religious worship. To wish may be innocent and proper in some cases, in which prayer would be unreasonable and idolatrous. I may innocently wish that a person in power may grant an office to a friend, to ask for which, if the person were present, might or might not be proper, according to circumstances; but to pray to him for it, when he is absent, with an expectation that he will hear and grant the request, would be downright idolatry." We may have occasion to make use of this quotation on other occasions; for the present, I would only request you to notice, as Dr. Smith has well observed, that it "overlooks, or notices very slightly, the point on which the whole question turns,—the nature of the blessings sought, and the qualities they imply in the person as whose donation they are deliberately desired. These blessings are not of that kind which one creature is competent to bestow upon another. They refer to the judicial state of an accountable being before God,—to the remission of moral offences, to the production and preservation of certain mental qualities, which none can efficaciously and immediately give, but he who holds the dominion of human minds and feelings, and to the enjoyments of supreme and endless felicity. They are—grace: the free favour of the Eternal Majesty to those who have forfeited every claim to it,—such favour as is in its own nature, and in the contemplation of the sup-

plicant, the sole and effective cause of deliverance from the greatest evils, and acquisition of the greatest good.—Peace: the tranquil and delightful feeling which results from the hope of possessing these enjoyments. These are the highest blessings that omnipotent benevolence can give, or a dependent nature receive.” That such is the nature of the blessings, it is impossible to deny or doubt. Mr. Belsham will not allow that the language we are now considering is to be considered as a prayer for them (though none but a Socinian can doubt of this), for that would involve the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ. It is not a prayer, but a wish, *i. e.* an inspired writer is chargeable with the greatest absurdity; for who can deny it to be absurd to entertain, and far more seriously to express, a wish that another person would bestow blessings upon us, which at the same time we know he is utterly unable to communicate? Now as I dare not imagine that the apostle John, writing under the direction of the spirit of God, would utter anything which is either idolatrous or absurd, I cannot but regard the words before us as containing decided proof of the doctrine of the Trinity.

To this it will perhaps be objected, that no mention is made of the Holy Spirit at all in this passage. The prayer—if it be allowed to be such—is addressed to the Father, and to Jesus Christ, and to the seven Spirits around the throne. Answer: the concluding words are doubtless intended to denote the Holy Spirit. The following admirable reasons have been assigned for this opinion. “It is well known,” says Dr. Smith, “that in the oriental style, the perfection of any quality . . . . is expressed by varied applications of the number seven: a figure probably derived from the history of the creation, the division of time into weeks, and the primeval

honours of the Sabbath day." "Thus the extremity of distress is denoted by seven troubles; the most complete refining of metals is called a being purified seven times; a character of consummate wickedness is represented by an enumeration of seven vices, or the inhabitation of seven evil spirits; the highest measure of accomplishments is signified by seven men that can render a reason; the perfect excellence of wisdom, by a palace with seven pillars; and the omniscience of God, by seven eyes and seven lamps. So also, still more remarkably, in this book of mystical visions, the perfection of the Divine government, in different parts of its administration, is described by the symbolical agency of seven angels, seven seals, seven thunders, seven trumpets, seven phials, seven plagues; and the perfection of power and wisdom in Christ, as exercised in the protection and government of the church, is represented by seven horns and seven eyes. Upon this ground I conceive that the principles of rational interpretation authorize our coinciding with those interpreters who understand by the expression, 'the seven Spirits which are before the throne,' that one Divine person who is called in Scripture the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit of God. This expression, according to the idiom just explained, and of whose signification we have such abundant proofs, conveys to us the representation of this heavenly Agent, in his own original and infinite perfection, in the consummate wisdom of his operations, and in the gracious munificence of his gifts. The symbolical position of this part of the imagery, the seven Spirits being before (*ἐνώπιον*) or in front of the throne, may be conceived to denote universal inspection, and readiness for action. It is true that the same expression is afterwards applied to the worshipping saints;

but the difference of the subject may authorize a different conception of the allusion. The principle of this interpretation is also confirmed by Eichhorn, who understands the phrase as denoting the absolutely perfect Divine nature." \*

§ 6. There are certain other passages which might be produced from the New Testament in support of the doctrine of the Trinity; on which however I do not intend to dwell, because their testimony is not, perhaps, so clear and explicit as that to which your attention has been called. Indeed, I am willing to grant that, if they stood alone, it might be doubted whether they would afford a sufficiently firm basis for a doctrine of so much importance as the Trinity. The evidence they give, if we had no other, might be deemed scarcely conclusive; though connecting it with that which I have already laid before you, there is no reasonable ground to doubt that the same important truth is developed, though it should be admitted to be somewhat less clearly developed than in the passages we have already considered. Of this nature is the account of the baptism of our Lord. "And Jesus," says the evangelist Matthew, "when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened upon him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." That the Father and the Son are here represented as distinct from one another, there can be no doubt; and that the Spirit of God is a third person we can as little doubt, after the decided evidence which has been laid before us that there are actually three persons in the one undivided essence. And that such is

\* *Scripture Testimony*, book iv., chap. ii.

the more natural way of understanding the passage is equally evident. It is a singular and anomalous description—to say the best of it—to represent an attribute descending in the form of a dove; yet, as it may be said that the passage is only a symbolical method of representing our Lord's anointing, or full investiture with the office, as well as the imparting of all needful gifts for the discharge of its duties, I would not—though to me it is an ample proof of the doctrine—give it much prominence in an encounter with an adversary.

Of the same nature, also, is that passage in Luke, to which we have referred for a different purpose: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Here the three persons in the Godhead are, in my apprehension, very distinctly revealed. And the same is the case with the language of Christ in the fourteenth chapter of John, where the Holy Ghost is promised by the Father and the Son.

You will doubtless observe that I have not appealed to the well-known passage in the fifth chapter of the First Epistle of John: "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word,\* and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." I have done this, because the most enlightened critics are very nearly agreed in refusing to acknowledge the passage itself to be genuine; and further, because if it be allowed to stand, the words would not prove that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are one in essence, but merely united in their testimony to the truth of the gospel.

It was stated, you will recollect, that the Old Testament Scriptures contain other proofs of the doctrine of the Trinity, besides the passages which have been

already referred to; but that they might be more advantageously considered after an examination of the statements of the New Testament, I proceed now to lay a few of the more prominent before you.

§ 7. The *Fifth* proof I derive from the forty-eighth chapter of Isaiah, verse 16: "Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord God, and his Spirit, hath sent me." The order of the Hebrew is, "the Lord God hath sent me and his Spirit,"—the word *רוּחוֹ* being manifestly the accusative after the verb. The middle clause of the verse—"from the time that it was," or of its being—presents a little difficulty, from the circumstance of the pronoun affixed to the substantive verb, rendered *it*, being in the feminine gender—"from the time that it was," or its being. What does *it*, or *its*, refer to? We should immediately say to *הַבְּרִאשִׁית*, "the beginning," in the former clause, were it not that that noun is masculine. "I submit," says an eminent critic, "to the judgment of the candid reader, that the reference is to the feminine *רֵאשִׁית*, understood by inference from *רֵאשִׁית* in the preceding clause." The passage therefore may be thus rendered: "Draw near to me, hearken ye to this; from the beginning I have not spoken in secret, or concealment; from the time that the beginning was, there was I: and now the Lord (Adonai) Jehovah hath sent me and his Spirit." This language so exactly answers to the statements of our Lord in the Gospel according to John,—“In the beginning was the Word,” and to the fact that the Father was to send the Holy Ghost in the name of Christ, that we cannot doubt that the speaker in the passage before us is the Son—that by Adonai Jehovah we are to understand the Father—and that by his Spirit the third person

in the adorable Trinity is meant to be denoted. The Socinians, indeed, contend that this passage is uttered by the prophet in his own person; declaring that from the commencement of his ministry he had delivered the Divine messages, not in the enigmatical and artful manner of heathen pretenders, but plainly and openly; and that he was now sent with an express Divine commission. The connection, however, utterly forbids this gloss. The speaker is manifestly the same throughout the whole context. "Mine hand," says this speaker—who can be none but God—in the thirteenth verse,— "Mine hand hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens." "All ye," it is added in the fourteenth verse, "assemble yourselves and hear; which among you hath declared these things? the Lord hath loved him,"—*i. e.* Cyrus, the appointed deliverer of the Jews from Babylon. "I, even I," it is added again in the fifteenth verse, "have called him," *i. e.* Cyrus; and then follows the passage to which we are now referring, "Come ye near unto me," &c. Besides, it may be observed that the very phraseology of the passage forbids the supposition that the prophet is the speaker. The demand of attention is a repetition of the very form used in the twelfth verse, where it cannot be denied that the speaker is God. The next clause also, "I have not spoken in secret," or concealment, is repeated from the forty-fifth chapter, verse 19; where there can be no doubt from whom the words proceed, as he announces himself to be the Lord who speaketh righteousness.

§ 8. The *Sixth* proof of the doctrine of the Trinity is taken from Isaiah lxi. 1: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent



me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." "This day," said Jesus, quoting these very words, "is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." This the Jews themselves are compelled to acknowledge.\* Several things are here affirmed concerning the speaker which will not apply to Isaiah, or to any other mortal, and which can be referred to none but the Son of God. And as the work which is here ascribed to the Messiah proves that he is God, it is not to be doubted that Jehovah and his Spirit, who are represented as sending and anointing him, are Divine persons also. The mutual illustration of this passage, and many in the New Testament, cannot but rise to the recollection of the serious reader. In prophecy the Messiah declares, —the Lord Jehovah hath sent me and his Spirit; and when actually sojourning with men, he asserts—"I came forth from the Father, and I am come into the world," —and he further promises—"The Comforter, whom I will send unto you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me."\* (John xv. 26.)

§ 9. The *Seventh* proof in support of this doctrine is taken from the threefold repetition of the name of God, which occurs more than once in the Sacred Scriptures. Thus we read in the sixth chapter of Numbers, verses 22-27, "And Jehovah spake to Moses, saying, Speak to Aaron, and his sons, saying, Thus ye shall bless the children of Israel, by saying to them, Jehovah bless thee and keep thee: Jehovah make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: Jehovah lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." It will be

\* See Luke iv. 16-22: "———And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth."

found impossible, I apprehend, to account for the exact triplicity of this divinely prescribed formula, without supposing that there are three persons in the Godhead; and that this was a designed, though partially obscure mode of intimating it, corresponding however with the comparative darkness of the former dispensation. It may strengthen our conviction that these words are in effect a prayer to Jehovah, as the Triune God, to notice that Jacob on his death-bed mentions the name of God thrice in his prophetic blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh, Gen. xlviii. 15, 16: "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God who fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads."

A passage of a similar description is found in the ninth chapter of Daniel, verse 19: "O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name." Why this threefold repetition of the name of God (Adonai), unless the Spirit of inspiration designed to intimate, though obscurely, the doctrine of a plurality of persons in the one undivided essence? This conclusion is strengthened by the circumstance that in the seventeenth verse there is a manifest distinction of persons; and a blessing is sought from one for the sake of the other. "Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake." Can we read these words without adverting to the language of our Lord,—“Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you?”

I think also, the threefold term of adoration employed by the seraphim, of which we have an account

in the sixth chapter of Isaiah, verse 3, is another passage of the same kind. "And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." I am aware, it may be said that this is merely intended to exhibit the transcendent excellence, the incomparable brightness of the Divine holiness. And I am free to admit that, if it stood alone, I could not build much upon it. But it must be taken in connection with what follows. The adorable Being to whom this ascription is rendered employs language, in the eighth verse, which proves beyond all question that plurality in some sense is to be ascribed to him: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" The threefold term of adoration, standing so immediately in connection with these words, it may be surely supposed, is designed to intimate that this plurality is restricted to, or includes a Trinity of persons.

§ 10. *Lastly.*—I would appeal to those passages in which there is an evident distinction between one being who is called God, and another being who bears the same august denomination,—thus intimating that there are personal distinctions in the Godhead, though, being one in essence, there is still but one God. Of this kind is Gen. xix. 24: "Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven," *i. e.* the Son from the Father; for if it had been merely intended to assure us that this awful destruction was the immediate work of God, it would have been sufficient to have said—"the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah," without adding "from Jehovah."

Of the same description is Psalm xlv. 6, 7: "Thy throne, O God," says the Psalmist, addressing the Son, as we know from the language of an inspired com-

mentator, "is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Again, in Psalm cx. 1: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." That these are the words of the Father to the Son, the language of the apostle Paul puts beyond a doubt: "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." Language which, from the connection in which it stands, most manifestly implies that he had said it of the Son. Of the same character also is Hosea i. 7. The speaker in the sixth verse is undoubtedly Jehovah; and he is reported to have used the following language in the subsequent verse. "But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the Lord their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen."

§ 11. I am well aware that these passages are not direct proofs of a Trinity of persons, because we recognise in them only two of the mysterious subsistences in the Divine essence: but they are proofs of the general doctrine of plurality; which plurality, it is amply demonstrated by other passages, extends to and is limited by three Divine subsistences.

In closing what I have to say upon this important doctrine, I must especially request you to bear upon your minds what was said at the commencement of a former lecture; viz. that in laying before you the direct proofs of a Trinity of persons in the one undivided essence, we are far, very far indeed, from exhausting the subject. There yet remains that numerous host of witnesses by which the Deity of the Son, and of the

Holy Ghost, are separately attested; all of which are clear and decided proofs that in the one Jehovah there are three hypostases, or distinctions, or persons. But upon the consideration of these passages I cannot, for the reasons already stated, enter at present. They will fall to be considered afterwards.

[THIRD SERIES.]

THE WORKS OF GOD.



## LECTURE I. •

---

### WORKS OF GOD—CREATION OF MATTER.

Works of God an illustration of his purposes or decrees:—topics discussed in this series, with definition of what is meant by CREATION:—import of the term **בְּרִיאָה**:—creation a fact:—arguments against the eternity of matter:—creation the work of God:—the power of creating not transferable:—the beings and the things created.

§ 1. “GREAT and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints!” Whatever Jehovah purposes, he invariably accomplishes, and in most exact and entire harmony with his previous designs. His decrees are the moving cause of that exertion of power, *ad extra*, by which they are executed; and the power that is thus put forth is an exhibition of the nature and extent of his decrees. The works of God, therefore, should always be associated with his eternal purposes, for by them are his designs or decrees made manifest.

In fact, all we know with reference to the purposes of God is gathered from the works of God. They are the mirror in which the otherwise hidden movements of the mind of the great Eternal may be contemplated. They draw aside the veil, and expose to view what must



otherwise have been locked up in the bosom of Deity. Do we desire to know what God is? let us examine his works, for he has left an impression of his own character on them all. Are we solicitous to ascertain what God has purposed? let us inquire what he has done; for his purposes are his works in intention, his works are his purposes in accomplishment.

We proceed, therefore, to a consideration of the works of God. They are, in the most extended sense, susceptible of three grand divisions, included under the terms—works of nature—works of providence—and works of grace. “God executeth his decrees,” say the compilers of the Assembly’s Catechism, “in the works of creation and providence.” At present we confine our attention to the first, and review the WORK OF CREATION as manifesting, in part, the nature or character of those purposes or decrees.

§ 2. Our remarks on this important topic may be comprised under the following heads. *First*, we shall examine the meaning of the term creation, or, in other words, explain what is meant by the works of creation; *Secondly*, we shall adduce proofs in support of the fact itself, that matter is not eternal, but that the universe had a beginning—that it *was created*; *Thirdly*, we shall notice the beings and things to whom creating power imparted existence; *Fourthly*, we shall speak of the time of creation; *Fifthly*, we shall describe the manner in which the work was commenced and consummated; and, *Sixthly*, we shall specify its object.

Prior to a more formal examination of the language used in the inspired volume, particularly by Moses in the Book of Genesis, I will endeavour to state explicitly what we mean by “creation;” and then we shall be able to see more clearly whether that idea is sustained by the

terms of Scripture. Creation then, I observe, intends that act of the Divine will and power by which the whole universe was brought out of a state of non-existence; for the apostle tells us, that when the worlds were framed by the power of God, the things that are seen were not made of things which do appear,—that is, they were not constructed out of previously existing materials.\* The work of creation was not the mere giving of shape and order to what was already in being,—it was not the mere throwing of forms of inimitable beauty over the rude and dark chaos of our world; but it was the production of the very elements, or principles, from which all that order and regularity, and light and glory, which we see around us, were educed.

§ 3. FIRST.—I PROCEED NOW TO EXPLAIN THE MEANING OF THE TERM CREATION.

It is not intended to assert that the word *bara* [בָּרָא], employed by the sacred historian in the first verse of the Bible, does necessarily, by its own proper power, denote the production of a creature out of nothing. That it may mean the contrary, indeed, is manifest. It is applied to those works which are expressly recorded to have been formed during the first six days from pre-existent matter. Though men are the offspring of their parents by natural generation, God is nevertheless denominated the Creator of every man; and that, not merely with regard to the soul, which indeed he creates out of nothing, but with regard to the whole person—the body as well as the immortal principle,—and no one can doubt that the body is compounded of pre-existent matter. There is even a passage where things which exist already are said to be created, where

\* See Heb. xi. 3.

new vigour is infused into them: "Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created [יִבְרָאוּן]: and thou renewest the face of the earth."\* Similar remarks might also be made with reference to the corresponding Greek and Latin terms, *κρίω* and *creare*.

It may perhaps be alleged concerning the word *יָבַר*, that its proper and radical signification is to give existence in the strict sense of the term,—to bring, as the common expression is, something out of nothing; and that when it is applied to any great change produced upon matter or beings already existing, it is used in a subordinate, secondary, or allusive sense, in harmony with that looseness and freedom of application which takes place with almost all terms in every language. I am, however, more disposed to concur in the opinion of Parkhurst, that it radically denotes either the production of substance or form,—the creation or accretion of substance or matter. It is used in both these senses—in the sense of producing into being, and of producing into the form of organized or finished beings—in the first chapter of the Book of Genesis: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The word cannot be used here in the secondary and allusive sense referred to above, *i. e.* in the second of the senses attached to the word by Parkhurst: it cannot, in other words, be employed in the sense of giving form to matter which previously existed; because the historian immediately adds, "the earth was without form,"—or "in loose atoms," as Parkhurst renders it. The creation of the heavens and the earth must accordingly here mean the bringing of them out of a state of non-existence; though, when it is said afterwards that

\* Psalms civ. 30. See also Isaiah lxx. 17, 18: "—— I create [יָבַר] Jerusalem a rejoicing," &c.

the Lord God created great whales, it can be as little doubted that the meaning is that he fashioned them into that particular form out of previously existing materials.

If however there could be any doubt as to the meaning of the word *אֵלֶּם* in the first verse of the Bible, it should not be forgotten that the work of creation, as we conceive of it (a conception which I shall afterwards endeavour to show is justified both by reason and Scripture), consisted not merely in arranging the great fabric of the visible material world in the form and order which it now presents, in which respect the world is said to have been created in six days; but in bringing those materials into existence over which were afterwards thrown such forms of inimitable beauty. To create is both to give being, and to produce formed and organized being; and both these displays of power were visible in the original production of all things. This is the point we proceed to establish.

§ 4. SECONDLY.—WE ARE TO ADDUCE, AS I HAVE SAID, OUR PROOF IN SUPPORT OF THE FACT OF CREATION.

There are few subjects which have given rise to more disputes than the one we are now considering. The opinions of the ancients, who had not the benefit of Divine revelation, were various, confused, and contradictory. All of them believed matter to have been eternal. They appear to have had no conception of its being possible to produce a substance out of nothing,—this is a work beyond, as they imagined, the power of God himself. Amongst their number were some who believed that the world was eternal as to its matter, but supposed that an intelligent mind was employed in bringing into their present state of arrangement the

various chaotic materials. Others again, amongst whom was Aristotle, considered the world eternal, both as to its matter and form.

Some of the schoolmen also contended for the *possible*, though they would not venture to affirm the *actual* eternity of the world. The orthodox deny both; and maintain that the supposition of either is contradictory to reason, and directly opposed to Divine revelation.

Those who contend for the possible eternity of the world reason in the following manner. "Though God did not actually create anything before that beginning of time which is mentioned in Scripture, yet he might, had he pleased, have produced things from eternity, because he had from eternity infinite power, and a sovereign will. This power might have been exerted, and so there might have been an eternal production of things; for to suppose that infinite power cannot exert itself is contrary to the idea of its being infinite." The plain answer to this reasoning—if it be worthy to be so called—is, that infinite power must be incompetent to effect an impossibility; and that it is a manifest impossibility to communicate infinite duration to a created, *i. e.* a finite being. The supposition of a creature having existed from eternity is self-evidently absurd. To be a creature is to have derived existence from God,—to have been eternal is not to have derived existence from God. An eternal creature is one who had a being before it was brought into being.

§ 5. But to assume that the universe was created, and from that assumption to argue against the possible eternity of the world, is to assume, an objector would tell us, the very point in dispute. The idea of an eternal created universe must be given up, as involving a contradiction; but why suppose that the universe was

created at all? Why may not matter have been eternal?  
I answer—

1. Because we are expressly told that “in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,”—*i. e.*, brought into being, as we have seen, the substance or matter of the heavens and the earth. The word cannot there denote that operation of Deity by which the material universe received its form, qualities, and laws; for after the initial act of creation had been put forth, after the earth had been spoken into existence, it was destitute of order and law,—it was, says the historian, “without form and void.” God not only made the shapeless mass assume regularity and beauty, but he made, first, the shapeless mass itself.

There are innumerable passages in which God is said to have created all things—to have been before all things. Yet, though I have no doubt that their import is that he gave substance or being to what had no being before, I do not dwell upon them; because an opposer might object that they merely denote that he gave not substance or being, but form only to the fabric of nature, giving to pre-existent but formless matter the shape and order and loveliness in which it is arrayed.

2. Matter, or the world, cannot have been eternal; for in that case it must have had all other infinite perfections: for infinite and finite perfections are inconsistent with each other. It must manifestly be self-existent: an eternal being cannot be otherwise. But to say that matter is self-existent is to utter one of the grossest absurdities. For whatever is self-existent exists necessarily, by an absolute necessity in the nature of the thing itself; so that it involves a contradiction to suppose it not to be, or to be any otherwise than what

it is. But there is evidently no such contradiction involved in the supposition of the non-existence of matter. On the contrary, it is perfectly easy to conceive, not merely that the present order and form and motion of the world, but the very matter of which it consists may be annihilated. The whole fabric of the material universe is manifestly an arbitrary and dependent existence; and hence it is said of God that he not only created, but that he upholds "all things by the word of his power."

3. Matter cannot have been eternal, since in that case it must have been equal with God; for that which has one Divine perfection must have all, as we have already seen. And if matter were equal with God—if it derived nothing from God, what right had God to it, to fashion it according to his pleasure, employing it in an inferior and subordinate capacity, and rendering it subservient to his glory? Every right of God, in relation to creatures, arises either from favours conferred by him upon them, or from an offence committed on their part against God. But according to the hypothesis, the former has no place here; of the latter, brute [or senseless] matter is totally incapable.

"Add to this also," says an excellent writer, "it can hardly be conceived how the Creator took possession of that which might be considered not only equal, but in some respects superior to God. It was at least a thing of which he stood in need, and which supplied him with materials and facilities for his operations, and thus was greater than God who needed it; while this supposed matter stood in no need of God, or at least received nothing from him. But every one is dependent on him whose assistance he needs to make use of; and every one, by employing that which pertains to another, is

inferior to him of whose property he avails himself—hence matter is not eternal.”

§ 6. And if matter is not eternal, if it received its being and properties from another, there can be no doubt from whom its existence was derived. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” We say nothing now with reference to the particular person of the Godhead who was the direct agent in this work, but merely request you to observe that the voice of reason, in union with that of Divine revelation, ascribes the creation of all things to God. “Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their hosts by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.” “Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?” “I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens *alone*; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself.” Parallel to this is the following expression in Job:—“Which *alone* spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea.”

§ 7. There can be no doubt then, amongst those whose judgments bow in implicit subjection to Divine authority, that the work of creation was actually effected by God. It has, however, been made a question whether the power of creating may be transferred from the great First Cause to others; and upon this question I propose to make a few remarks, before we proceed to the third branch of our subject. The negative of this question is supported by the following reasons.

*First.*—Because it is by the work of creation that the true God is distinguished from idols. “Thus shall



ye say unto them," said the Lord, by the mouth of Jeremiah, "The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens." But Jehovah is "the true God," who "made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion." So also in the Psalms: "All the gods of the nations are idols [or vanity and a lie]; but the Lord made the heavens." In like manner Ezechias distinguishes the true God from all false gods by this sign, that he made the heaven and the earth. It may be said, perhaps, that all this proves nothing more than that, in point of fact, the work of creation was effected by God alone, which is conceded; and not that the power of creating might not be imparted to a creature. I cannot conceive, however, that Jehovah, in distinguishing himself from all false gods, would have fixed upon the accomplishment of a work, as the grand point of distinction, which might have been performed by another, although in point of fact it was not. It is all but infinitely more probable, that he would fix upon something to which no extent of limited power whatever could possibly be made to reach.

*Secondly.*—We take the negative of this question, because the affirmative is highly derogatory to God. "Creation," says one, "is the production of a thing by the mere command of him that creates. If therefore we imagine that God communicates this privilege to any creature, that at his—the creature's—command a certain other thing may exist, the existence of this thing must take place either with or without Divine co-operation. But either part of the supposition involves a manifest contradiction. If it be asserted that it is without Divine co-operation, then it follows that God wills

and gives existence to a creature which does not depend upon himself in its operations; and that, by the mere will and command of this creature, something may even exist without his consent. To suppose which is not less absurd than it is dishonourable to God. If it be asserted, on the contrary, that the existence of this thing is with the Divine co-operation, it will then follow that it is not the creature, properly speaking, which creates, but God at the command of that creature; upon whose willing the existence of something, God is supposed to will and command the same thing." This, however, is not only contrary to the hypothesis, but it also makes God dependent in his operations on the will of a creature. To suppose which is infinitely derogatory to the dignity of the Supreme Being. We conclude that the power of creating cannot be transferred to any dependent and limited being.

*Thirdly.*—We take the negative side of this question, because creation supposes the exertion of omnipotent power. Vast power—power immeasurably surpassing our conceptions may, we grant most willingly, be conferred upon a creature, but surely not all power, or omnipotence. If omnipotence could be communicated, by parity of reasoning, so might omniscience, and any other, nay all the other natural and essential attributes of Deity; *i.e.*, in other words, God might create a God, a being in all respects equal with himself,—than which few suppositions certainly are more self-evidently absurd.

And how can it be doubted that the work of creation supposes the exertion of omnipotent power? How infinite is the distance between being and not being! What but omnipotence can enable the latter to travel through this immense extent, and approach into the

territories of the former? Think what it is to create. To bring into existence, by a word, what was formerly in a state of non-existence. To cause matter and substance, and life and beauty, to arise out of confusion and deformity, at a nod, which infinitely transcends all created power. But to bring these things out of nothing. To produce a finished universe, not with suitable instruments, and out of materials admirably adapted for the purpose, but without instruments (for there can be no instruments of creation), and destitute of materials to operate upon. If we do but thus reflect for a moment upon what creation implies, we shall confess that it requires omnipotent power. If there be any truths in moral science which deserve to be called self-evident, certainly this is among the number. There must be a defect either in the mind or the heart of that individual who does not receive it as such. It is scarcely to be established by reasoning, because it is the basis of reasoning. It is one of those axioms in moral science which establishes itself by its own inherent light, and serves for the elucidation of statements over which there may rest comparative darkness. On these grounds, it is denied that the power of creating can be communicated by the great First Cause to any of the creatures, however exalted, of his power. I pass on—

§ 8. THIRDLY,—TO CALL YOUR ATTENTION TO THE BEINGS AND THINGS TO WHOM CREATING POWER IMPARTED EXISTENCE.

I might very summarily dismiss this part of the subject, by saying that all things and all beings owe their existence to God.\* For since it is affirmed that “in the beginning”—i. e. when the first act of God *ad extra* broke in upon the solitude of eternity—“God created the hea-

vens and the earth," i. e. the places of residence for all created existence,—there could have been prior to this no created existence in the universe. But as I am here presented with an opportunity of giving some account of one or two of the orders of created existence, more favourable than may perhaps occur again, I have resolved to embrace it.

The productions of creating power may be classed into animate and inanimate. The latter include all the residences of those countless myriads of creatures which have organization and life superadded to bare existence; as well as every substance not endowed with vitality which are to be found in them. They are summarily described as the heavens and the earth in the Sacred Scriptures. It would be foreign to my purpose to enter upon a description of the inanimate productions of creating power. With the exception of the peculiar abode of Deity,—of which, indeed, we know but very little, and which is included in the general term heavens,—such a description would be more in place in a course of lectures on Astronomy, or Geology, or Natural History, than Theology. This latter science has to do with living and rational and accountable creatures, and not with inert and brute matter.

The animate productions of Divine power may be divided into the rational and irrational. With the latter of these we have nothing to do in a course of Theological Lectures. It is the former only to which we deem it right to direct our attention; and of these there are two classes—angels and men. That there are no other created rational beings in the universe besides these is more than we dare affirm; certain it is, however, that we have no knowledge of any other. To say, as some have done, that we have every reason on that account

to conclude that there are no other, is, I apprehend, going too far. Divine revelation may not make mention of others, if others there be, because they have no present connection with us, are in no way either serviceable or injurious to us, for whose exclusive benefit this revelation was designed. A similar silence might have been preserved in the word of God with reference to angels, had there not been a sufficient cause for breaking it. But fallen angels are our tempters; good angels are, to Christians, ministering spirits. A revelation, therefore, which had given us no account of this order of intelligent beings might have been justly considered defective.

It is possible, and indeed probable, that there are gradations of rank amongst the angels of God. The language of the apostle, "thrones, principalities, and powers," seems to convey this idea. But what is the precise nature of the difference, we know not. We can only present you with a few general statements with reference to these exalted intelligences.

## LECTURE II.

---

### WORKS OF GOD—THE CREATION OF ANGELS.

The Scriptures the exclusive source of our knowledge respecting this class of intelligent beings:—their rank and station:—nature and attributes:—the employment of angels:—the duties of angels in connection with mankind:—the specific ways in which they are of assistance to the godly:—the purposes for which their ministry is employed.

§ 1. FOR any portion of knowledge we possess concerning this order of intelligent creatures, we are exclusively indebted to Divine revelation. Irrespective indeed of the light we derive from this source, it would seem probable that creating energy was not exhausted by the production of such beings as we see in this world,—that other parts of this vast universe are peopled with animated beings as well as this; and that, noble a creature as man may be allowed to be, it is yet to be imagined that the stations nearer to the eternal throne than those which we occupy are filled with beings more exalted than man—with beings approximated in some slight degree nearer, though the distance between the Creator and the creature must still be infinite, to the blessed and uncreated source of their being and glory. Reason, however, can yield us

no certainty that any besides 'terrestrial existences are to be found in the universe; far less can it instruct us concerning their rank, their nature, or their employments. For such information we are indebted to the Scriptures alone. To the Scriptures, therefore, we make our direct appeal.

That there is a race of beings in the universe besides ourselves, to whom the name of angels is given, and that they as well as we were created by God, are topics so apparent, even on a cursory inspection of Divine revelation, that it were a mere waste of time to dwell upon them. "For by him," says the apostle Paul, "were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him." \* The date of their creation is, doubtless, the beginning mentioned by Moses in Gen. i. 1; there being no other beginning of existence but this, and therefore no beginning before it,—nothing existing before creation, but the Creator, whose existence is without beginning. Passing over these matters, upon which some have dwelt at unnecessary length, all I have to say upon this subject may be comprised under the three following heads; viz. the rank or station—the nature and attributes—and the employments of the angels. And here I wish to apprise you, before I proceed, that I shall do little more than present you with a condensed account of the statements of Dwight upon this interesting subject. I do this for two reasons. First, because I utterly despair of being able to produce anything of my own at all comparable with them; and, secondly, because they are in themselves so admirable—the subject being one, more-

over, on which only scattered hints are to be found in the word of God—that they deserve the most careful attention of every theological student. My object in these lectures is not originality, but usefulness. I shall be at all times willing to sacrifice the former to the latter. If in the course of my reading, on the various subjects which come before us, I meet with anything which exactly expresses my sentiments, and in a better manner than I could state them myself, I shall without hesitation lay them before you. As we proceed, I find myself too frequently driven to the necessity of giving you what may be more directly considered my own, by the want of such assistance as I could wish: I am therefore compelled to seek for needless occasions of appearing original. I again say that my sole object is to lay before you the best statements I can either produce or find, on the various subjects which come before us. This avowal will, I am sure, prevent the necessity of apologizing for what might otherwise be justly deemed plagiarism.

§ 2. FIRST.—We inquire into the rank and station of the angels. They are, says Dwight, the highest order of intelligent beings. We do not gather this, indeed, from the name by which we have now distinguished them; for the import of that, viz. messengers, proves that it is descriptive not of their nature, but their office. But it is clearly taught us by other titles, which are applied to them in the word of God. They are called thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers; and that not with respect to any particular part of the kingdom of God, but as intimating the station they sustain in his immense and eternal empire. Throughout the dominion of God, therefore, they hold authority under him. All other finite beings are consequently



beneath them in dignity, and subordinate to them in station.

The place assigned them for their residence proves also the truth of this statement. They surround the throne of God, stand in his presence, and worship continually at his feet. "I am Gabriel," said the angel who appeared to Zacharias in the temple, "that stand in the presence of God." (*Vide* also Rev. iv. 6-8; vii. 11; Isaiah vi. 1-3; Ezek. x., &c.) "What beings," very properly asks Dwight, "can we rationally suppose would be admitted to a communion so intimate with their Creator, an access to him so near, a distinction so wonderful?" To this there can be but one answer,—“None but those who sustain the first character and the highest station among created beings.”

In support of this statement, Dwight further appeals to the glory and splendour with which these celestial beings have customarily appeared in the present world. Witness the angel who rolled away the stone from the door of our Lord's sepulchre.

It has been urged, rather in opposition to these statements, that though man is in many respects inferior to the angels, yet that he is more an ultimate end of the creation than they; or that the angels were made for man, and not man for the angels,—and hence are represented as “ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.” This assertion is not however, I imagine, altogether correct. That the great end of creation—the manifestation of the Divine glory—is most eminently secured by the formation of man, and that on this account the very highest order of created intelligences are employed to execute the purposes of God towards the church in general, and every one of its members in particular, must be acknow-

ledged. But if it be argued, from the ministry which they perform towards man, that they are subordinate to him, as Dr. Hopkins states, it appears to me that the same reasoning must be applied to Christ; for he came "not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." The ministry which angels perform towards the Church springs primarily from their love to the Saviour, and their devotion to him. It proves that they are subordinate to Christ; but not surely that they are so to man.

§ 3. SECONDLY.—Let us notice the nature and attributes of the angels.

The *First* remark I make here is, that they are generally conceived to be purely spiritual and incorporeal beings. Some imagine, indeed, that they are united to bodies, though more fine and subtile than ours are. The opinion of the orthodox has been most commonly against this supposition; and I am disposed to go with the current, though I decidedly think that some of the arguments in support of the incorporeity of these exalted beings will not bear examination. The language of our Lord, for instance, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have," may only have been used in accordance with the prevailing notions concerning spirits or apparitions. And when the apostle says of God that he "maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire," it may be justly doubted whether he intends to affirm anything concerning their nature. He is rather describing the office in which the providence of God employs them. He maketh them spirits, or winds; for the word means winds. The expression may mean, and I think does mean, "He maketh them as winds." They are swift as winds, they are ardent as fire, in performing the offices assigned them; so that they speedily and

effectually accomplish their commission. The Lord gave the word; and in a single night one of these messengers smote, in the camp of the Assyrians, an hundred four-score and five thousand men. Byron says,—

“ Like the trees of the forest when the summer is green,  
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:  
Like the leaves of the forest when the autumn has flown,  
That host on the morrow lay wither'd and strown:  
For the angel of death spread his wings on the blast,  
And breath'd on the face of the foe as he past;  
And the eyes of the sleepers wax'd deadly and chill,  
And their hearts but once heav'd, and for ever were still.”

And when the apostle, referring to them in his Epistle to the Colossians, speaks of them as invisible, his language may intend no more than that they are invisible to us; besides matter may be so attenuated as, like air, to be incapable of being discerned by the eye of man.

Some have argued that they cannot have bodies; since in that case it would have been impossible for them, and improper in them, to have assumed other bodies, when they appeared on various occasions to men. This takes for granted, however, the very point in dispute; for an objector might allege that, for aught we know to the contrary, they may have appeared in their own proper bodies. It is perhaps more to the point, when it is alleged that if they had bodies they must occupy space; in which case it could not be true, as we know it was, that a legion of devils was in one demoniac.

*Secondly.*—Angels are possessed of wonderful power and activity. Proof of the former is supplied by the application of the term power, or might, to them in the gospel. It intimates, says Dwight, that their very

nature is power. They are said to excel in strength. The phrases "a strong angel," "a mighty angel," indicate the same thing. Proof of their power is also supplied by the works they have performed. An angel destroyed, as we have seen, the army of Sennacherib,—cut off, in three days, threescore and ten thousand persons out of Judah and Israel, in consequence of the sin of David in numbering the people. Angels are the executioners of God's judgments: one of them is represented as having bound the prince of the power of the air, "and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him."

Proof of their activity is supplied by the passage in the Hebrews to which we formerly referred—"Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire." "The phraseology," says Dwight, "forcibly declares the eminent activity of the beings described by it, who are thus represented as moving with the swiftness of winds . . . . and operating with the astonishing energy of flaming fire." The same writer refers to the flight of Gabriel from the supreme heaven to this world, while Daniel was uttering his evening prayer, as exhibiting the wonderful activity of the angelic hosts.. "This is a rapidity," he adds, "surpassing beyond any comparison the amazing swiftness of light;" since the heaven of heavens, he thinks, is at a much greater distance from us than the stars. Now that this may be the case, I am not disposed to deny; but as we know nothing about the locality of this heaven, I would not rest an argument upon it.

*Thirdly.*—"Angels," adds our author, "are endowed with unfading and immortal youth." Being incorporeal, they are incapable of death, properly so called; because death is a dissolution of the body and the spirit: so that

angels, being pure spirits, cannot die. They are indeed capable of annihilation; but that they are destined by the Being who gave them existence to immortality is evident, as Dwight says, from the name *Zwa*—living ones—by which John in the Apocalypse has distinguished them; since that name evidently intimates that life is their proper nature,—at any rate, that the God who created them will never permit them to sink into nothing.

The angels also who stood before Mary, at the tomb of our Lord, appeared as young men, though at least four thousand years old. "Their youth," says Dwight, "a bright and beautiful blossom, still shone with all its lustre and fragrance; and directly indicated that it was superior both to accident and time, and would, after many such flights of years, survive in all its vigour; being destined, as well as fitted, for immortality."

*Fourthly.*—Angels are eminently distinguished by the knowledge they possess. It is unnecessary to remind you, that there are some things of which they must be ignorant, since omniscience is an attribute of God alone. They cannot know the heart, *i. e.* they cannot be aware of its secret thoughts, except in the same manner in which they become known to us, by external manifestations. They can have no knowledge of future events; though doubtless they can form more correct conjectures with regard to futurity, having more ample data for it, than we can. Our Lord denies, accordingly, that they have any knowledge of the judgment day. Still, however, their knowledge is probably more extensive and exact and profound than we are accustomed to imagine. And even the very passage which I have fixed upon to prove that their knowledge is limited,

shows, at the same time, that it is vast and comprehensive. For the assertion of our Lord—"Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only"—would have no force and pertinence, as Dwight justly observes, except on the supposition that nothing which is known of the works and ways of God is hidden from the angels.

In proof of the extent of their knowledge, Dwight adduces the following arguments. The assertion, in the Book of Revelation, that they are "full of eyes within;" *i. e.*, says he, they are all sense, all intellect, all consciousness; discerning all things within the reach of their understanding, with a clearness of perception which is the most perfect created semblance of the intuitive and boundless views of the Omniscient Mind. The face of a man, the symbol of intelligence, is also attributed to them. They were formed with an entire freedom from sin; the only source of prejudice, and the chief source of error. Their advantages for acquiring knowledge have been proportionate with their faculties. They have ever dwelt in the world where truth reigns without opposition; where knowledge is the universal state and character; where all mysteries are continually disclosed. And they have had a long, as well as admirable opportunity of enlarging the sphere of their knowledge. Six thousand years have they been unceasingly employed in studying the works of God. Weariness and decay they know not. Strength of understanding is in them incapable of being impaired. Every object of investigation is to them delightful; and every faculty, by its nature, susceptible of improvement. O, when we recollect the almost boundless stores of literature which many men have acquired in the short course of sixty years, what must we think of the attainments of

the angels after six thousand years of vigorous and constant and incessant attention!

That the angels must then be possessed of almost boundless information, and that they are capable of mutual intercourse, is undoubted, since they are represented as speaking or crying one to another. But in what way knowledge is gained or communicated by disembodied spirits, I feel myself utterly unable to conceive. Much learned speculation—or, as it might be more fitly denominated, trifling—has been indulged in by the schoolmen upon this point; some of whom (as Turretine says, “*de loquela angelorum temere garriant ac si ipsos loquentes audivissent*”) gabble as rashly about their conversations as if they had actually heard them speaking. Where nothing is known, where nothing can be known, it is the wisest part to say nothing; and certainly I have no intention to be guilty of the folly of breaking this maxim.

*Fifthly.*—Angels are possessed of consummate holiness, and of all those graces which can adorn and embellish the character. Their joy at the creation of man, —their transport at the birth of the Saviour, who came to manifest and vindicate the holiness of God, even in the dispensation of mercy,—and their noble and disinterested exultation in the repentance of ruined sinners, —the name “seraphim” which they bear, denoting the flame of Divine love which burns within them,—and the occupation of the four living ones, the representatives of the angelic host in the heavens, who celebrate with untiring voice the matchless perfections of Jehovah,—

\* [The preceding statements are sometimes *verbatim*, but often are greatly condensed. Hence *inverted commas* are omitted, as in some cases impracticable as well as unnecessary, after the statement made in a previous lecture: see pp. 332, 333.]

are all sublime manifestations of the unalloyed holiness, of the pre-eminent moral beauty of mind possessed by this dignified order of beings.

There is nothing which can contribute to the perfection of created loveliness of which angels are not possessed. They are sincere, gentle, meek, kind, compassionate, and perfectly confirmed to that great moral principle communicated in the words of the Lord Jesus, when he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. This sublime excellence, adds Dwight, has varied with length of years merely higher and higher towards perfection, and shone, not only with undiminished, but with increasing beauty and lustre. There is no good, which it is proper for angels to do, which they are not habitually prepared to do. There is no kindness, capable of being suitably exercised by them, which they do not in fact exercise. The good which they have already done has only prepared them to do more and greater good; and the disposition with which it was done has only become stronger by every preceding exertion.

§ 4. THIRDLY.—I pass on to notice the employments of angels.

That they spend not a life of inactivity, all who reflect upon the essentially active nature of mind, and recollect the high faculties which they possess, will readily admit. Nor is it less manifest, that the noblest offices under the infinite dominions of God are entrusted to them. Whatever demands the employment of created power, activity, virtue, and knowledge of high distinction,—whatever is, in an eminent degree, complicated; vast, or sublime,—can with propriety be committed only to beings eminently invested with these illustrious attributes. What then are the peculiar offices entrusted to them? what are the employments in which they are



called to engage? And here I shall not dwell upon those employments which are common to them with other beings, but refer to those alone which are in kind or degree peculiar to themselves. They are employed, says Dwight, in studying the works of God, and in learning from them his perfections. And so, it may be very properly stated, are all Christians: the only difference is that angels, in some points of view at least, have higher advantages and facilities for improvement than men. There is nothing characteristic of the race of beings to which they belong in this employment.

The duties and employments in which they are engaged may be classed under two heads,—those which relate to God, and those which relate to men. With reference to the *First* of these classes, it may be observed that they are especially employed in celebrating the praises, and in performing and executing the will and purposes of the great Eternal.

First: one part of their essential business is to celebrate the praises of God. To this office they have a special appointment; so that the songs of adoration they present are to be regarded in a somewhat different light from the praises of holy men on earth. In Isaiah's vision of the glory of the Lord, he saw the cherubim, and heard them crying one to another, and saying, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." It is of infinite importance to the universe that the character or glory of God should be fully unfolded; and hence the necessity of an order of beings whose especial duty it is to stand around his throne, to attend him on all occasions, and to lift the song of praise to his great name. Hence in the vision which John had of the throne of God, he saw, in perfect

accordance with the sublime prospect which opened upon the view of Isaiah, in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, four living creatures full of eyes before and behind; and they were full of eyes within; and they rest not, it is said, day nor night, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." The commands addressed to them,—“Worship him, all ye gods” (Psalm xcvi. 7),\* —“Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength” (Psalm ciii. 20),—“Praise ye him, all his angels” (Psalm cxlviii. 2),—are, it will be seen, in perfect accordance with the office to which they are thus specially appointed. Hence also, at the creation of the world, the angels are said to have sung together; and at the nativity of our Lord, the morning of the great work of redemption, they appeared to the shepherds in multitudes, praising God, and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men.”

A second part of the business to which they are especially appointed is to do the pleasure and execute the purposes of the great Eternal. Hence they are said to stand before him, as his servants or ministers,—to see his face, that they may receive and execute his high commands. In the vision of the Ancient of days which Daniel saw, he beheld thousand thousands ministering to him, and ten thousand times ten thousand standing before him. (Dan. vii. 9, 10.) “I saw the Lord,” said Micaiah the prophet, “sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left.” (1 Kings xxii. 19.) It is also to mark their especial appointment to execute the high commands of God, as well as their promptitude in his service, that

\* [For the term *gods*, the apostle, in quoting the passage (Heb. i. 6.), substitutes the word *angels* (ἄγγελοι).]

they are represented with the appendage of wings. And it is remarkable, in the vision of the cherubim granted to the prophet Isaiah, each of whom had six wings, that while they covered their faces with two of those wings, to denote their reverential awe of God, and that the highest created intelligence cannot sustain the effulgence of his glory, and their feet with other two wings, to denote the necessity of perfect purity with regard to all who approach them,—it is remarkable, I say, that the third pair of wings was left unemployed, to be ready for instant use. They stood before or over against the throne, with wings expanded, to execute the mandates of their great Creator. (*Vide* Isaiah vi. 1–3.) In harmony also with the previous account of their special appointment to serve God, we find them actually ministering to the Saviour, at his nativity, during his temptation in the wilderness, when he was in an agony in the garden, at his resurrection, and ascension. While we are assured that, at the close of the present system, an archangel preceding him will call the dead out of their graves; while the multitude of the heavenly hosts will shout to the universe the awful wonders of the final day, and subjoin to all its amazing transactions their solemn Amen.

§ 5. The *Second* division of the duties and employments of the angels comprehends those which relate to men, both saints and sinners.

They are, first, employed in executing the judgments of God upon the ungodly. Of this assertion we have proof in abundance. They smote the men of Sodom with blindness. They destroyed the armies of Sennacherib as we have seen, and cut off three score and ten thousand out of Judah and Israel. They were the immediate instruments of inflicting the vengeance of God

upon Nebuchadnezzar and Herod; for of the latter it is said that the angel of the Lord smote him. And by their agency the finally impenitent will be cast into the prison of hell, at the last day. For "the Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." "To us," says Dwight, "with our limited views and strong partialities, this office may seem undesirable, and a diminution of that perfect felicity which has been attributed to this distinguished order of beings. The decision however, he adds, will easily appear to be unfounded, if we remember that they possess an entire and unchangeable confidence in God, and in the perfect rectitude of all his dispensations; and, in innumerable instances, a clear comprehension of the nature and import of the dispensations themselves, the wisdom and goodness with which they are brought to pass, and the valuable and glorious ends which they are intended to accomplish."

Secondly: they are agents by whom God bestows many blessings upon his people in this world. He communicates by them the effects of his care and love to the church; for they are all "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." This is thought to have been represented by Jacob's ladder; on which they are exhibited as continually ascending and descending, from earth to heaven, and from heaven to earth, to execute the purposes of God towards his people. Accordingly, we are furnished by the Scriptures with numerous examples of their actual ministry to the people of God. Angels delivered Lot from Sodom; Jacob from Esau; Daniel

from the lions; his three companions from the fiery furnace; Peter from Herod, and the Jewish sanhedrim; and the nation of the Israelites from the Egyptians, Canaanites, and Assyrians. Thus they conducted Lot, Abraham, and the Israelites, in seasons of great difficulty and danger, to places and circumstances of safety and peace. The list of similar instances might be greatly enlarged: the above must suffice.

§ 6. To this enumeration of cases in which they have actually ministered to the people of God, it may be well to specify some of the particular ways in which they render assistance to them. 1. They are employed in suggesting good thoughts to their minds, to stimulate them to that which is good. 2: By their ministry, the people of God are often preserved from accidents and dangers which would otherwise overtake them. Jehovah, it is said, gives his angels charge over the righteous; and "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about those that fear him, and delivereth them." 3. God employs the instrumentality of angels to secure his people against the temptations of the adversary; and thus he frustrates the purposes, and preserves them against the onsets, of the devil. In our Lord's agony in the garden, "there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him." 4. They are appointed to be witnesses of the obedience and sufferings and worship of the disciples of Christ, that they may give testimony to them before God, and in the great assembly of the last day. Hence the apostle Paul teaches us that the apostles, in their preachings and sufferings, were made a spectacle unto angels. (1 Cor. iv. 9.) Hence also he charges Timothy, "before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels," to discharge aright the duties of the office to which he was appointed. (1 Tim.

v. 21.) And it is not improbable that he had respect to the presence of angels in the assemblies of the saints for the worship of God, when he enjoined modesty and sobriety upon women in those assemblies on their account. (1 Cor. xi. 10.) 5. They conduct the spirits of the faithful to their final and blessed abode. Lazarus died, "and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." (Luke xvi. 22.)

§ 7. Purposes for which the ministry of angels is employed. 1. To put honour upon the angels themselves. 2. To comfort the faithful; for it exhibits the care which Jehovah takes of them, employing on their behalf the ministry of beings who are naturally so much superior. 3. To conciliate friendship between angels and men. 4. To secure order and subordination in the universe.

## LECTURE III.

### WORKS OF GOD—FALLEN ANGELS.

The term *angels* represents two classes of beings:—the existence of evil spirits denied:—the ground of belief in their existence:—the amount of our information respecting their original state, and their defection:—the cause of their fall:—consequences of their fall:—the manner in which they attempt to accomplish their wicked designs:—their ability to inflict physical as well as spiritual evil.

§ 1. THE Scriptures include under the general term *angels* two different and opposite classes of beings: one distinguished by every quality which is adapted to awaken esteem and affection in all holy minds; and the other pre-eminent in everything that is contemptible, and base, and odious. These latter are distinguished as “the angels that sinned,” and “kept not their first estate.” They constitute that powerful and invisible band of adversaries who, being sworn and eternal enemies to the government of God, perpetually aim to lead men into sin, that they may gratify their own malignant passions, and frustrate the purposes of the Eternal in our creation. The latter class form the subject of this lecture.

§ 2. It has become a fashion of late years, among a certain class of philosophical theologians, to doubt and

deny the existence of this order of beings. Having ascertained, they would fain persuade us, that the supposed place of their residence is a mere bugbear of superstition, it was but natural for them to conclude that its sovereign was just as ideal a being as the dominions in which he had been said to exercise his sovereignty. It is true, they will admit, that the Scriptures make express mention of the devil and his angels; but then this is figurative language. The devil is a personification of the principle of evil; or, as the principle of evil itself is a mere abstraction, of those lusts and passions which draw men astray from God. Such is the theory.

In the pulpit, I should scarcely think of setting myself to prove the mistake of these men. But as you may come into contact with them, and as theological students should be armed at all points, we will point out, first, the grounds on which we affirm the existence of fallen angels; and, secondly, state the amount of scriptural information which can be gathered concerning them.

§ 3. FIRST.—Let us review the grounds on which our faith in the existence of evil spirits rests. The Scriptures are here manifestly our only guide; for though it is, as it has been very properly argued, *à priori*, more probable perhaps that Jehovah, who is a pure and simple spirit, would create a race of incorporeal and spiritual beings more nearly resembling himself on that account than do the human race, than that he would create man, yet reason is totally unable to discover whether such a race of beings has been brought into existence,—and far more whether they all retain their original purity, or whether a part of them has lost it. We have proved from Scripture that such beings were created; it is not less manifest, from the same records,



that some of them revolted from their allegiance to their Maker, and sunk into a state of guilt, and condemnation, and misery in consequence of it. Their fall is thus distinctly affirmed,—“God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment.”\* Can this and the corresponding passage in Jude be figure? What man, whose judgment and conscience are in subjection to the word of God, can possibly think so? Might we not despair of proving any statement to be literal, if this is not so? I do not know that Socinians deny or doubt the existence of angels; and yet I will venture to affirm that there is no part of Scripture, from whence their existence is generally inferred, which has less appearance of figure than this. Besides if the passage be not literal, of what, I ask, can it be figurative? Not, surely, of evil principles and passions; for how can they be said to be bound in chains of darkness? There is no conceivable foundation on which to construct such a figure,—unless evil principles and passions, so far from being found walking the earth, had been confined to the bottomless pit, which, alas! we know is not the case. And if this be not the meaning of the words, what other figurative meaning can it have? In perfect harmony with the literal sense of these words are all the representations of Scripture upon this point. We might expect that those apostate spirits who dared to raise rebellion in heaven, and were excluded from its light and glory on account of it, would cherish the most rancorous hatred of God, and put forth all their powers to oppose and frustrate the accomplishment of his purposes. We find their chief accordingly in the garden of Eden, immediately after the creation of man, endeavouring to

\* 2 Peter ii. 4.

blight the virtue which he could not endure to contemplate, and to avenge himself of God by bringing the creature, whom he had formed in his own image, into the same state of guilt and wretchedness in which he had involved himself. The serpent said unto the woman, "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" And having thus early commenced his assault upon man, he has continued it to the present time, and will to the last moment of the world's existence; for he goeth about, we are assured, "as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." Oh, but this is figurative language! we are told. But if so, of what, I ask, is Satan, or the devil, symbolical? It is replied, of those lusts and passions which lead men into sin. This explanation may satisfy those who deny the doctrine of the fall of man—who suppose that he came from the hands of his Maker possessed of all the evil propensities which he manifests at present. But it will scarcely be received as sufficient by such as believe that he was created a holy being; for the devil tempted man before the fall, and his temptations were the immediate cause of the fall. But if the devil be nothing more than a personification of the principle of evil, it is manifest there was no devil in existence till the fall; nay, the fall gave existence to him!

This reasoning cannot, however, be expected to satisfy those who believe that Adam was the subject of the same depraved appetites and passions with ourselves. Let us therefore apply their principle of explanation to a few passages of Scripture; and the preposterous folly of the whole system will at once appear. "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan, *i. e.* lusts and passions—came also among them. And the Lord said unto lusts and

passions, Whence comest thou? Then lusts and passions answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth." And again: "Lusts and passions went forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job, with sore boils." "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for lusts and passions and his angels." "Mary Magdalene, out of whom went seven lusts and passions." "And as he was yet coming, lusts and passions threw him down, and tare him; and Jesus rebuked the lusts and passions, and healed the child." These instances are only ludicrous: there are others which are impious, which cast a foul stain upon the spotless character of the Son of God himself. "Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of lusts and passions. And lusts and passions came to him, and said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." It is quite unnecessary to proceed. Enough of folly and impiety has been elicited to show that the Socinian version is totally inadmissible; and that it is a fearful display of the art of the destroyer, that he has contrived to blind so many of our race to the plain and evident fact of his existence.

§ 4. SECONDLY.—We proceed to state the amount of information which can be gathered concerning them. This may be arranged under the following particulars. The first regards their original state. The second, their subsequent defection. Thirdly, the cause of their fall; and, fourthly, its consequences, both as it regards others and themselves. We consider—

*First*,—their original state. On this point, there seems no reason to doubt, it may be observed, that they were originally, both morally and intellectually considered, equally exalted with those orders of angelic

beings who maintained their integrity. "God spared not the angels that sinned," says Peter,—an expression which carries with it the necessary implication that there was a period of their existence—what were its dimensions we know not—when sin could not with truth and justice be charged upon them. "They kept not their first estate," says Jude, "but left their own habitation,"—words which clearly intimate the dignity and glory of their primitive condition. That they must have been originally holy and happy creatures may be certainly inferred from the fact that they are the workmanship of God. No being can come out of the hands of infinite purity in a state of moral defilement, and no holy being can be otherwise than happy. And though there are doubtless different degrees of positive holiness, and positive happiness, among beings all of whom are holy and happy, there is no reason to suppose that the intellects of those angels that fell were originally less clear, or that their hearts burned with a flame of love to God less pure and ardent, than was the case with reference to those angels that stood; unless the fact of their falling were itself supposed to supply a reason. We must not, however, infer their inferiority on that account; since a high degree of holiness, assailed by a powerful temptation, may sink,—while inferior virtue, not subjected to the same severe trial, may retain its standing and vigour.

*Secondly.*—Let us look at their subsequent defection. "They kept not their first estate"—or "principality," as it might be rendered,—*i. e.*, says Turretine, "the original sanctity and rectitude in which they were created." This is doubtful, however: the expression seems to be more equivalent in meaning with the following clause,—“but left their own habitation.” The language of Peter is,

however, very explicit,—“God spared not the angels that sinned.” Of this melancholy revolt in the heavenly world, and among the highest order of created beings, we have no regular history in the Scriptures; though of the fact itself there can be, as we have seen, no doubt. We have no information concerning the number who were implicated in this revolt; though there is reason to think it was very far from being inconsiderable. The poet, if I mistake not, tells us that millions of spirits crowd the air. We admit that this is no authority; but if seven devils were cast out of Mary Magdalene, and a legion out of the demoniac, we may certainly infer, perhaps, that the god of this world must have forces under his direction in numbers surpassing our conception, when he can spare so many for one particular service.

Neither are we expressly informed whether the whole band of apostate spirits revolted from their allegiance at the same time, or whether in separate companies and at different periods; nor, if the former were the case, whether the spirit of disaffection originated in the bosom of one, by whom all the rest who ultimately joined him were tainted; or whether it sprung up in all simultaneously. The more probable opinion, perhaps, is that which is generally held, that one of pre-eminent distinction, rebelling against his Maker, was joined in his revolt by a multitude of others. That passage in the Revelations, xii. 7, in which the dragon and his angels is represented as making war with Michael and his angels, and, further, as being overcome and cast out of heaven, is thought by many, with some probability, to contain an allusion to their primitive apostacy; in which case it would be decisive of the matter. It is, however, an argument of more weight, that the whole

multitude of apostate spirits are represented uniformly in the word of God as combining their influence, and acting under the directions of one individual among them, who is called "the prince of the devils, the god of this world," and who, in connection with the higher order of his agents, is represented as "the ruler of the darkness of this world." For the probability is that their present leader is the master-spirit who led them into rebellion, and under whose banners they now unite to seek revenge. We proceed to notice—

§ 5. **THIRDLY**,—the immediate cause of their fall. Strange to say, that Josephus and Philo, together with the Jews and many of the Fathers, imagined they had found the cause of their fall in the second verse of the sixth chapter of Genesis,—“Then the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair;” supposing that angels, and not the visible people of God, the descendants of Seth, or pious men, were denoted by the phrase “the sons of God.” It is impossible to conceive a greater absurdity.

Others, again, have imagined that, on the creation of man, it was revealed to them that higher honour would be ultimately put upon the human nature, in consequence of its assumption by the second person of the Trinity, than upon the angelic; and that through the powerful promptings of envy, thus quickened into life, they lifted the arm of rebellion against God.

This opinion takes two things for granted which can never be proved: viz., *First*, that the fall of the angels did not take place till after the creation of man,—an opinion which I imagine is rendered improbable by the circumstance which was alluded to a short time ago, viz. that they were found, immediately after the creation of man, in the garden of Eden, plotting his destruction;

and, *Secondly*, that a revelation of the designs of God with reference to man was made to the angels,—admitting even that they preserved their integrity till after his creation. But that such a revelation was made is rendered highly improbable by the language of Peter, who represents the angels, bending from their elevated seats, like the cherubim of old, over the mercy-seat, through the impulse of an ardent desire to look into those things which relate to the salvation of the church,—a circumstance which could scarcely have taken place, if such a revelation as we have now supposed had been made to them.

Others, again, imagine that the impulse of pride was the direct and immediate cause of their rebellion against God. This is the more probable opinion. It is indeed, as Dwight says, sufficiently evident from 1 Tim. iii. 6, where Paul, speaking of a bishop, says he must not be a novice, (*νεόφύτος*, a new convert,) lest, being puffed up with pride, “he fall into the condemnation of the devil.” In this passage, it is plainly asserted that the devil was condemned for his pride; and it is fairly presumable that the same sin was the source of condemnation to his companions. The revolt, he adds, in harmony with what was stated a short time ago, appears to have been but one—to have existed at one time—and to have united those who shared in it in the same guilt, as well as in the same undertaking. Indeed, the term “devil” may be used in a collective sense to denote the whole body of apostate spirits.

In confirmation of this opinion, it may be added that the passion to which the devil appealed, in his assault upon our first parents, was the passion of pride,—“Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil;” and that his main object, from that moment to the present,

has been to shake the authority of God over mankind, and to enthrone himself in the sovereignty of this lower world.

An excellent writer has thus described, in the case of fallen angels, the progress and development of this accursed passion. It must have been preceded, he states, by inconsideration, and by negligence in contemplating the manifold and infinite perfections of God. The force of their acute intellect was directed too much to the contemplation of their own powers. This begat self-love—self-love was carried into pride—and pride was followed by rebellion.

The proximate cause of rebellion was—there can be little doubt—dissatisfaction, resulting from pride, with the rank and station assigned them by their Maker, prompting them to grasp at a higher post in the scale of being, if not to put themselves upon an equality with God himself. “They kept not their first estate,” says Jude, “but,” according at least to the rendering of our translators, “left their own habitation.” This version, however, is a very incorrect one. The word *arche* [ἀρχή], rendered “estate,” means, as McKnight states, in the twentieth chapter of Luke and the twentieth verse, “office;” and the word *oikētērion* [οἰκητήριον], rendered “habitation,” means “the place in which they were appointed to execute this office.” It may have been this earth, or some other residence assigned them in some other world; or it may have been in heaven. It is of more importance to observe, says McKnight very justly, that by saying the angels kept not their own office, but left their proper habitation, the apostle insinuates that they attempted to raise themselves to a higher station than that which God had allotted to them; consequently that the sin for which they are



to be punished was pride and rebellion. Dwight indeed says that by the phrase, "their own habitation or principality," heaven is perhaps intended; or that happy world in which all the angels were originally united together around the throne, and in the peculiar presence of God. If this sense be admitted, he adds, as by most persons it probably will be, then it would seem that they voluntarily deserted this happy place, and chose to withdraw themselves from its glorious blessings, rather than continue under the government from which they were derived. It is impossible, however, that this can be the sense of the passage, because the apostle Peter declares, not that they voluntarily left heaven—a supposition which is little less than ridiculous,—but that they were "cast down to hell, and delivered into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment." Yet if the term *oikētērion* [*οικητήριον*] does not mean principality, or the place appointed for the execution of the office assigned to them, whether it were on earth, in heaven, or in some other world, but means heaven itself, we must conclude, however absurdly, from the language of Jude that they voluntarily left it.

§ 6. FOURTHLY.—We proceed to consider the consequences of their fall, both as it relates to them and to others. All I have to say upon this point may be comprised under the following particulars. They lost thereby, and that permanently, the holy image of God, and sunk to the lowest state of moral degradation and wretchedness. Vanquished and destroyed by temptation themselves, they became the tempters and destroyers of others. In consequence of their apostacy and guilt, they are now in a state of punishment, and may anticipate yet severer displays of Divine indignation and wrath at the great day of account.

*First.*—By their awful revolt, they lost permanently the image of God, and sunk into the very lowest state of moral degradation and wretchedness. They lost the image of God; for that image consists, as we have seen, in rectitude and benevolence,—the whole of the moral character of Jehovah being comprehended under one or other of these terms.\* And that all regard to rectitude, and all love to being in general, was extinguished in their bosoms by their fall—every affection of their minds sinking under the engrossing and degrading feeling of self-love—is but too manifest from their hellish plots against the virtue of man, as soon as it began to shed its perfume over the face of this lower world, and from their uniform conduct since that moment to the present time. The Spirit of truth has thus drawn the character of the devil: “He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it.” (John viii. 44.) And again: “Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” Here, again, it is necessary to remember that the term devil is used in a collective sense, to denote the whole body of apostate spirits.

I have said further, not merely that they lost the image of God, but that they lost it permanently. In this point of view, their condition differs materially from that of man. He lost the image of God, but not permanently and finally. Upon his heart the Divine lineaments may be again retraced by the finger of the Holy Spirit; but it is not so with them. They are unable to renew themselves after the image of God; and this all-important change is not to be looked for from

\* [Vide the Author's Lectures on *Original Sin*, p. 9, *et seq.*]

Jehovah himself. Not that he is unable to effect it; but, in the exercise of his wisdom, he has determined not to do it. The supremacy of their guilt may, perhaps, render the awful spectacle of their eternal suffering morally necessary to the order and stability of his government.

I have further said, that by their awful revolt, they sunk to the very lowest depths of moral degradation and wretchedness. I mean, that depraved and wretched as man has become in consequence of sin, he is yet surpassed in both these points of view by those who were first in the transgression. The shades of diabolical are even yet blacker than those of human turpitude and pollution. There is a depth of malignity in the hearts of fallen angels beyond the gauge of human conception. Fallen men hate God with all their hearts, and so do devils; but the latter are capable of an intensity of feeling to which the former can in no case rise. The mental power of devils is greater than the mental power of men; and where depravity is complete, we form our estimate of the comparative positive degree of depravity which attaches to two beings by the difference of their mental energy. And then there has been everything in their case to rouse and irritate their passions into the most furious state of development. They have not, like fallen man, lost a heaven which they never saw,—but one of whose blessedness they were once the sharers, whose glories once played around their heads. The disappointment of their bold, and adventurous, and golden projects—the loss of heaven's supremacy, just too when they fancied they were about to catch and wield it,—the galling remembrance of their mortifying defeat, when far more than existence was staked upon the issue of the contest,—the recollection of

the Conqueror's car pressing upon them, and hurling them headlong from the abodes of bliss,—the scorching heat of the glowing lakes of sulphur in which they are engulfed,—the fearful contrast of their past and present condition—the former all light and glory—the latter all darkness, fire, and chains,—and, finally, the appalling and withering consciousness that light and life, and hope itself is lost,—all these reflections, crowding at once upon their recollections, and operating upon minds of great power and energy, may be expected to raise up a tempest of furious rancour against the God of heaven, of which we can form but a feeble conception. Our immortal poet has thus inimitably pourtrayed this horrible state of mind, in the description and speech of Moloch:—

“ — the strongest and the fiercest spirit  
That fought in heaven, now fiercer by despair:  
His trust was with the Eternal to be deem'd  
Equal in strength; and rather than be less  
Car'd not to be at all; with that care lost  
Went all his fear: of God, or hell, or worse,  
He reck'd not; and these words thereafter spake:—  
‘ My sentence is for open war: Of wiles,  
More unexpert, I boast not: them let those  
Contrive who need, or when they need; not now.  
For, while they sit contriving, shall the rest,  
Millions that stand in arms, and longing wait  
The signal to ascend, sit lingering here  
Heaven's fugitives, and for their dwelling-place  
Accept this dark opprobrious den of shame,  
The prison of his tyranny who reigns  
By our delay? No! let us rather choose,  
Arm'd with hell flames and fury, all at once,  
O'er heaven's high towers to force resistless way,  
Turning our tortures into horrid arms  
Against the torturer; when to meet the noise  
Of his almighty engine, he shall hear

Infernal thunder; and, for lightning, see  
 Black fire and horror shot with equal rage  
 Among his angels; and his throne itself  
 Mix'd with Tartarean sulphur and strange fire,  
 His own invented torments."——

And with this account of what must necessarily be the moral condition of apostate spirits agree all the representations of the word of God; for they evidently proceed on the assumption that the devil is their chief, if we may so speak, not in the Socinian and figurative sense of the expression, but in sober reality the principle and essence of evil impersonified. If any mighty mischief is effected in this lower world, the devil is the author of it. If any especially degrading lusts are manifested by mankind, they are the lusts of the devil. While to denote a character of finished depravity, it is said of an individual that he is a child of the devil.

*Secondly.* — We observe that, vanquished and destroyed themselves by temptation, they became the tempters and destroyers of others. I need not dwell on the proof of this fact. *The names* by which their chief — who is doubtless a moral specimen of the whole race — is described attest it. He is called, κατ' ἐξοχήν, the tempter; and *Abaddon*, the destroyer; while to exhibit his craft to allure unwary souls, and his power to ruin them, he is denominated a serpent and a lion. *Their conduct proves it.* For Satan was found assailing the human race in their covenant head, immediately after their creation: nor has he ceased from the practice of his devices from that moment to the present; for he goeth about like “a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour,” — an expression which powerfully exhibits his activity and his strength, &c. His assaults are also

as general and extensive as they have been persevering. There has not existed a human being around whom he has not endeavoured to draw the serpentine folds of his temptations; and so great is his audacity, as well as his cunning and perseverance and strength, that it prompted him to make an assault upon the Lord of glory himself. "Then was Jesus," says the historian, "led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil."

The melancholy results, also, of his inroad upon this world proves that he is the tempter and destroyer of the human race; for over the minds of a large majority of this world's population he has obtained, and still preserves, an entire ascendancy. He is "the ruler of the darkness of this world," "the prince of the power of the air," who now worketh in the children of disobedience. While comparatively few are acquainted with his devices, great multitudes have fallen by them; and the ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands whose sun will ultimately set in the night of eternal death, ruined as well as tempted by him, will attest, in a manner not to be mistaken, that the statements we have given are by no means false or exaggerated.

§ 7. With respect to the particular manner in which the devil aims to accomplish his purposes, the way in which he insinuates thoughts into our minds, and how his suggestions are to be distinguished from the natural operations and weakness of depraved nature, I cannot now at any rate say anything. But the observations of Dwight, designed to remove any difficulty which might be supposed to be felt with regard to the general subject of their agency in this world, are too important to be passed over unnoticed. He states—

"That fallen angels, if permitted, should act in the

affairs of mankind, is attended with no more improbability than that virtuous angels should thus act." And—

"That angels should communicate thoughts, either good or evil, to mankind, is originally no more improbable than that we should communicate them to each other. We do this," he adds, "daily and hourly, in many ways which are familiar to us by experience, but which were originally unimaginable by ourselves, and probably by any other finite beings. We show our thoughts to each other by words, tones, gestures, silence, hieroglyphics, pictures, letters, and many other things. All these, antecedent to our experience of them, were hidden in absolute darkness from our conception. If all mankind had been born dumb, no man would have entertained a single thought concerning the communication of ideas by speech. The conveyance of thought by looks, also, if never experienced by us, would have been necessarily deemed mysterious and impossible. Yet very many thoughts are thus conveyed by every person living, and with very great force, and frequently with entire precision. Nay, the countenance often discloses the whole character at once."

"That angels communicate their thoughts to each other we know, because the Scriptures have declared the fact; that they may communicate them to us, we have no solid reason to doubt. Of the mode of communication, in either case, we know nothing, and are unable to conjecture anything but what is idle and useless. But that they may convey thoughts into our minds contravenes no analogy and no evidence."

"Should it be said, that when we communicate thoughts to each other, we are conscious of the act by which the thoughts are communicated to us, and of the presence and agency of the communicator, but that we

are conscious in no instance of communication from angels, and never perceive their presence or agency, whence it is reasonably concluded that angels do not convey thoughts to our minds,—I admit the declaration as just; but deny the inference derived from it by the objector. There is no proof, from anything with which we are acquainted, that thoughts cannot be conveyed to us by a being of whose presence and agency in conveying them we are not conscious. In the Scriptures, we are informed abundantly that God, by his Holy Spirit, communicates thoughts to mankind. But it is certain that we have no consciousness of his presence and agency in communicating them. Of the thoughts themselves we are indeed conscious, but not of the source whence they are derived. The same doctrine, for aught that appears, is equally applicable to our reception of thoughts from angels."

§ 8. Before dismissing the consideration of the agency of fallen angels, it may be proper to notice, what is manifest from Scripture, "that they are capable, when permitted, of doing mischief to the estate or body, as well as the mind of an individual. Of this, the case of Job affords decided proof. Nor is there any absurdity, anything inconsistent with the Divine goodness in this supposition. They are only instruments in God's hands, and under his direction and control as much as any other cause whatever; and they must therefore be subject to the same rules as any other means which Providence may employ in distressing or destroying human life, as storms, inundations, the passions and powers of wicked men, a putrid air, vitiated humours of the body, &c. In all these causes, whatever is the instrumental, God is the appointing and directing cause."

*Thirdly.*—In consequence of their guilt and apostacy,



they are now in a state of punishment, and may anticipate yet severer displays of Divine indignation and wrath at the great day of account." "God spared them not," says the apostle, "but cast them down into hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness." Thus the punishment due to their crimes—or at any rate a part of that punishment—immediately overtook them. It was a suitable punishment. "Darkness," as it has been well said, "is a state obviously suitable for beings to whom the light of heaven was unsatisfactory and odious; and chains are most proper for beings whose proud and wanton wishes were discontented with the glorious liberty of the sons of God." Let not the phraseology we are considering be thought at variance with the preceding statements, that devils are continually roaming abroad over the face of the earth, and tempting, with a view to destroy, mankind; for the expressions may mean no more than that they are degraded from their former high and glorious state, and chained or confined to a much lower, narrower, and darker situation, without any hope of favour, until the judgment of the great day, when they, with all workers of iniquity, shall be cast into everlasting fire.

Their present state, however, melancholy as it is, is not to be their final one; it falls incredibly short of its horrors. The language of the apostle is remarkable,—  
"They are reserved unto judgment." Properly speaking, judgment has not passed upon them yet. At present they are only under restraint, to prevent their finally escaping the doom they deserve; and is it to be imagined that their horrible abuse of the restricted liberty they are permitted to enjoy, during the interval between their incarceration and their trial at the great day, will pass without punishment? No, says Dwight, with whose

words I close this long lecture,—their “punishment and degradation are not completed. They will hereafter be tried and condemned for all the evils which they will have wrought, or attempted, during the continuance of this earthly system. Those evils, however gratifying to them in the perpetration, will, after the judgment, return upon their own heads; and, instead of the triumph for which they hoped and laboured, will cover them with endless shame, and overwhelm them in endless ruin. The chains which they now wear are literally everlasting; and will confine them unto the judgment, so that they cannot escape; and will confine them for ever in the sufferance of that misery to which they have destined themselves by a voluntary devotion.”

## LECTURE IV.

### WORKS OF GOD—THE CREATION OF MAN.

The subject, one of the first importance:—the Scriptures afford the only rational information on the primitive condition of man:—the Mosaic record on the subject:—the time of man's creation:—the constituent parts of man:—the human soul:—the argument for its materiality:—the validity of, examined.

§ 1. THE subject upon the consideration of which we now enter is one of the very first importance, and presents claims upon our notice of especial interest and urgency. "Curiosity," as it has been observed with equal truth and beauty, "naturally prompts us to inquire into the records of the family or society to which we belong. Every little incident that relates to our ancestors is collected with care, and remembered with pleasure. The relation which it bears to us gives it consequence in our eyes, though in the eyes of others it may seem to have none. The mind, in its progress, finds attention excited, as the velocity of a falling body is increased; nor can it repose at ease on any account which stops short of the original and first founder of the community."

Every motive of this sort conspires to animate our researches into the origination of mankind, and the his-

tory of our common progenitor. We cannot but earnestly and anxiously wish to be acquainted with the circumstances relative to the father of that family of which all nations are parts—to discover and examine the root of that tree whose branches have overspread the earth.

Nor are such investigations to be deemed matter of curiosity only. To form proper ideas of man, it is necessary that we should contemplate him as he came from the hands of his Maker. We must know in what condition he was placed—what duties resulted from the various relations which he sustained—and what were the powers given to him for the discharge of them. We must ascertain whether he still retains his original *status* and character; or whether some alteration in his condition may not have subjected him to new wants, and new obligations. Upon a knowledge of these particulars every moral system must be constructed, which is designed for the use of mankind. A system in which the consideration of these things has no place is but too much like prescriptions issued by a physician unacquainted with the constitution of his patient and with the nature of the disease under which he has the misfortune to labour.

§ 2. “To the Scriptures we are exclusively indebted for all the knowledge we possess of the primeval state and condition of man. And it is no slight proof of their inspiration, that the account they give us of the origin of our race—of the character of its head—of the blessings he originally enjoyed—and of the loss, the awful loss he sustained by disobedience—is the only intelligible and rational account. Nothing contrary to reason, nothing obviously impossible, nothing improbable—admitting the boundless power and goodness of God—

appears in the narrative of the Jewish historian. It presents no appearance of splendid invention, but of sober, serious truth. It has the air, certainly, of a simple narrative of facts. It carries the judgment along with it; and I have not the slightest doubt, if the biblical account of the origin of our race, and the most intelligible and rational fictions of paganism, were laid, for the first time, before a man of sound discernment, that, placing his hand upon the Bible, he would say,—

‘Here I stand on solid rock, and all is sea besides.’”\*

This is certainly more than he could say for the conflicting account of the poets and rhetoricians of heathenism, or for the theories of the ancient philosophers, or the more elegant and refined conjectures—if conjectures even they deserve to be called—in which any, among the nations of antiquity, indulged.

§ 3. To the Mosaic account of the creation of man, his primitive character and condition, let us now proceed to direct our attention. I believe, all that I shall feel, it desirable to lay before you may be comprised under the following particulars. The announced determination of Jehovah to exert his power and wisdom in his formation,—the time when he was brought upon the great stage of being,—the constituent parts of which he was made to consist,—the image in which he was formed,—and the dominion to which he was raised.

FIRST.—We shall notice briefly the announced determination of Jehovah to exert his power and wisdom in his formation. “Let us,” said God, “make man in our image, after our likeness.” No language like this was

\* [Vide the Author’s *Doctrine of Original Sin*, pp. 4, 5. There are a few *verbal* differences between the MS. and the above extract: the Editor has not, therefore, hesitated to make the Author quote himself.]

uttered previous to the production of any other part either of the animate or inanimate creation. They were brought into existence by a word. "He spake, and it was done." The elements, as it has been observed, were his servants. He said to one, "Go;" and it went: to another, "Come;" and it came: to a third, "Do this;" and the command was instantly obeyed. But to the formation of man (with reverence be it spoken) he seems more immediately to have addressed his power and his wisdom. The language to which reference has been made, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," seems to intimate that his creation was the result of a special council, and that peculiar importance was attached to it. And such was verily the case. This world was the destined theatre for an unrivalled, and, indeed, a full and perfect exhibition of the Creator's character and glory; and the creature about to be formed was the destined being, on the conduct of Jehovah towards whom, the principalities and powers in the heavenly places were hereafter to gaze with blended astonishment and admiration and delight. The words attributed to Jehovah on this occasion by the historian denote forethought, and were employed by the sacred writer to denote that man is the noblest work of God—the most distinguished production of Divine power and wisdom in the world. The very remarkable plurality involved in this important passage has been already the subject of remark. It is unnecessary to repeat what has been said. I proceed therefore to notice—

§ 4. SECONDLY,—the time when he was brought upon the great stage of being. On this point, it has been beautifully remarked by Bishop Horne, that "we may observe of the Divine procedure what is true of every human plan, concerted with wisdom and foresight,

that that which was first in intention was last in execution. Man, for whom all things were made, was himself made last of all. We are taught to follow the heavenly artist step by step, first in the production of the inanimate elements, next of vegetables, and then of animal life; till we come to the master-piece of creation—man endowed with reason and intellect. The house being built, its inhabitant appeared. The feast being set forth, the guest was introduced. The theatre being decorated and illuminated, the spectator was admitted to behold the splendid and magnificent scenery in the heavens above, and the earth beneath; to view the bodies around him, moving in perfect order and harmony, and every creature performing the part allotted to it in the universal drama; that seeing he might understand, and understanding adore its supreme Author and Director.”

“This mighty preparation” for the reception of man “conveys to us,” as Dwight justly observes, “high ideas concerning the object for which so much was done. God does nothing but with the strictest propriety. The bounty, which here flowed in such copious streams, was directed by infinite wisdom, as well as poured out by infinite goodness. While, on the one hand, it was glorious to its Author, it was, on the other, perfectly suited to the character and circumstances of the recipient. The recipient, therefore, was of such a character as to be a proper object of these illustrious communications.”

Great wisdom, it may be further observed, as well as exuberant goodness, was displayed by the great Creator in delaying the creation of man till the last day. In this part of God’s dominions at least, man is the only being endowed with reason,—a gift which

necessarily connects accountability with it. Man alone is the subject of moral government; and his duties spring out of the relations he sustains, the circumstances in which he is placed. It seems eminently proper, then, that he should not be brought upon the stage of action till the part allotted to him to perform was fully prepared—till the great Creator, especially, had given so full and ample a display of his character in his works, that he had only to open his eyes to see his matchless glory shining in the most splendid manifestations all around him.

§ 5. THIRDLY.—We proceed to notice the constituent parts of which he was made to consist. Information upon this part of the subject is given us, with great distinctness, in the seventh verse of the second chapter of Genesis: “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” One might almost imagine we behold the heavenly potter at work. He first collects the clay; he next arranges and tempers it; he then sets the wheel in motion; and there rises up before us a perfect man in appearance; but it is cold and motionless, like a statue. The blood has not been put into circulation; the heart has not learned to beat; the lungs have not begun to play. The heavenly potter next proceeds to communicate the vital principle,—that high and mysterious property, the bestowment of which so clearly manifests omnipotent power: he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. And by this one act he not only communicated the sensitive and animal life, but a rational and immortal soul; for the words of the historian clearly imply that man was made to consist of a body, so organized as to be sustained in life by the action of the elements upon



it, and a spiritual principle of soul, supported by the influence of a superior and spiritual agency.

The wisdom of the Divine Being most manifestly appears in the component parts of which man was made to consist. He was designed to occupy the middle rank, between the world of matter and the world of spirits; and to hold connection with both: and therefore he is not all matter nor all spirit, but compounded of both. His body and his bodily organs are material; and by means of them his connection with terrestrial and material objects is preserved. His soul is spiritual; so that he is capable of enjoying intercourse with his Maker.

Both these constituent parts of our nature are adapted to excite our admiration, exhibiting as they do the wonderful skill and power and goodness of God. This is the case even with respect to the body, the inferior part of our nature; for though it can claim no higher origin than that of the animals by which we are surrounded, yet, as it has been well said, it is a most wonderful frame. "The parts of which it is composed; their number; their various natures, dependencies, operations, and uses; the arrangement by which they are formed into a system; a world within itself; the faculties attached to it, of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and feeling; its capacity of pain and pleasure; the warnings which it is fitted to give of approaching or commencing evil; and the power which it so variously possesses of self-restoration—are all wonderful, mysterious, and strongly declaratory of the skill and goodness of the Creator. Nor ought we, on this occasion, to forget the peculiar structure of the person; the beauty of the complexion; the symmetry of the members, particularly that displayed in the features of the

face; the gracefulness and dignity of the motions; nor the power of the countenance to express the thoughts and feelings of the mind. By this last mentioned attribute, the face becomes an index to the character of the invisible man; and shows not only his ideas, but his emotions also; his virtue and vice; his loveliness and deformity; and, in a word, whatever his fellow men are interested to know."

§ 6. Of a still more wonderful nature is the human soul. It is a simple uncompounded essence, not made up of parts, and therefore incapable of dissolution. In this important particular, it differs essentially from all material substances. These are, universally, collections of innumerable atoms; and therefore become, whenever the bond which unites them is destroyed, subjects of dissolution. Nothing more is necessary to the destruction of the material form—*i. e.* the body—than the mere separation of its parts. The soul, for the reasons already stated, being incapable of suffering this process, cannot perish, unless by annihilation. And as there is no example within the experience of man of annihilation, no reason can be drawn from analogy to support the supposition that the existence of the soul will ever be terminated.

We are told, however, that man has no soul properly speaking, no principle that is distinct from the body,—that consciousness, sensation, and thought, together with that noble train of elevated feelings and affections, in consequence of the possession of which human nature presses, if we may so speak, upon angelic,—that these are all the properties of matter, the result of organization merely. We are told that when it is said, "The Lord God breathed into man the breath of life, and man became a living soul," the intention of the writer is

merely to say that he communicated to him the vital principle, and did not leave him, after he had moulded the machine of his body into such beautiful proportions, an inanimate statue. As this subject is one of acknowledged importance, I shall endeavour to lay before you the testimony both of reason and revelation with reference to the nature of the human soul. The question to be decided is as follows,—

*Is there in man an immaterial or spiritual principle, —or are thought and sensation the results of organization?*

§ 7. *First.*—I shall give you some account of the philosophical arguments which have been produced with a view to decide the question concerning the nature of the human soul. It will be necessary here to lay before you the reasonings of those who contend for the materiality of the human soul; or rather, who deny that there is any principle in man distinct from his body, and ascribe all the mental phenomena to organization. I shall do this the more readily, because, if it should appear that the evidence from reason is not so preponderating as has been sometimes imagined, it will only be adapted to call forth warmer emotions of gratitude to Divine revelation—or rather its glorious Author—which has placed the subject beyond the reach of doubt. That man is material, at least partly so, we know: for this we have the evidence of our senses. “If, then, thought and sensation,” argues Dr. Priestley, “can be supposed to be the properties of matter, it is not philosophical to ascribe them to a supposed spiritual principle of which we know nothing, and of whose existence we have no distinct and independent proof. If one kind of substance,” says he, “be capable of supporting all the known properties of man,—that is, if those proper-

ties have nothing in them that is absolutely incompatible with one another,—we shall be obliged to conclude (unless we openly violate the laws of philosophizing, which will not allow us to multiply causes or kinds of substance without necessity,) that no other kind of substance enters into his composition; the supposition being manifestly unnecessary in order to account for any appearance whatever. All the properties that have been hitherto attributed to matter may be comprised under those of attraction and repulsion. Besides these, man is possessed of the powers of sensation or perception, and thought. But if, without giving the reins to our imaginations, we suffer ourselves to be guided in our inquiries by the simple rules of philosophizing above mentioned, we must necessarily conclude that these powers also may belong to the same substance that has also the properties of attraction, repulsion, and extension,—which I, as well as others, call by the name of matter. The reason of the conclusion is simply this,—that the powers of sensation or perception, and thought, as belonging to man, have never been found but in conjunction with an organized system of matter; and therefore that those powers necessarily exist in and depend on such a system. This at least must be our conclusion, till it can be shown, that these powers are incompatible with the other known properties of the same substance; and for this,” he adds, “I see no sort of pretence.” And again. “Had we formed a judgment concerning the necessary seat of thought, by the circumstances that universally accompany it, which is our rule in all other cases, we could not but have concluded that in man it is a property of the nervous system, or rather of the brain; because, as far as we can judge, the faculty of thinking, and a certain state of the brain, always accompany and

correspond with one another; which is the very reason why we believe that any property is inherent in any substance whatever. There is no instance of any man retaining the faculty of thinking when his brain was destroyed; and whenever that faculty is impaired or impeded, there is sufficient reason to believe that the brain is disordered in proportion: and therefore we are necessarily led to consider the latter as the seat of the former. Moreover, as the faculty of thinking, in general, ripens and comes to maturity with the body, it is also observed to decay with it; and if in some cases the mental faculties continue vigorous when the body in general is enfeebled, it is evidently because in those particular cases the *brain* is not much affected by the general cause of weakness. But, on the other hand, if the brain alone be affected, as by a blow on the head, by actual pressure within the skull, by sleep, or by inflammation, the mental faculties are universally affected in proportion. Likewise, as the mind is affected in consequence of the affections of the body and brain, so the body is liable to be reciprocally affected by the affections of the mind, as is evident in the visible effect of all strong passions. These are certainly," he adds, "irrefragable arguments that it is properly no other than one and the same thing that is subject to these affections, and that they are necessarily dependent upon one another. In fact, there is just the same reason to conclude that the powers of sensation and thought are the necessary result of a particular organization, as that wind is the necessary result of a particular concussion of the air. For in both cases equally, the one constantly accompanies the other; and there is not in nature a stronger argument for a necessary connection of any cause and any effect. To adopt an opinion different from this

is to form an hypothesis without a single fact to support it.”\*

In the same strain of reasoning another late able writer proceeds.—“The only reason we have for asserting, in any case, that any property belongs to any substance, is the certainty or universality with which we find the substance and the property in question accompanying one another. Thus we say that gold is yellow, ductile, soluble in nitro-muriatic acid; because we have always found gold, when pure, to be so.” And on this foundation he builds his doctrine, that all the vital and intellectual functions are dependent upon or are the properties of organization. “Where,” says he, “is the mind of the child new born? Do we not see it actually built up before our eyes, by the actions of the five external senses, and of the gradually developed internal faculties? Do we not trace it, advancing by a slow process through infancy and childhood, to the perfect expansion of its faculties in the adult?—annihilated for a time by a blow on the head, or the shedding of a little blood in apoplexy,—decaying as the body declines in old age,—and finally reduced to an amount hardly perceptible, when the body, worn out by the mere exercise of the organs, reaches, by the simple operation of natural decay, that state of decrepitude most aptly termed second childhood? Where then shall we find proofs of the mind’s independence on the bodily structure? of that mind

\* The following epitaph on Dr. Priestley brings his reasoning to a conclusion at once apt and pointed. Who can exclaim, *very true!!*

Here lie at rest,  
In oaken chest,  
Together pack’d most nicely,  
The bones and brains,  
Flesh, blood, and veins,  
And *soul* of Dr. Priestley.

which, like the corporeal frame, is infantile in the child, manly in the adult, sick and debilitated in disease, phrensied or melancholy in the madman, enfeebled in the decline of life, doting in decrepitude, and annihilated by death? Take away," he adds, "from the mind of man, or from that of any other animal, the operations of the five external senses, and the functions of the brain,—and what will be left behind?"

§ 8. I think I have now given you about as strong a statement of the argument in support of the materiality of the mind as can well be produced. We will now proceed to consider its validity. In doing this, I am disposed to admit that we ought—reasoning on philosophical principles merely, without any reference to Scripture—to concede, I think, to Dr. Priestley, that the power of sensation or perception never having been found but in conjunction with a certain organized system of matter,—that we ought to conclude that this power necessarily exists in, and results from that organized system, unless it can be shown to be incompatible with other known properties of the same substance. On the supposition of the existence of an immaterial principle, it is perfectly possible, indeed, that some kind of organized body may be necessary to it, as an instrument without which it could not exert its faculties. The invariable connection, then, of the thinking power with a certain bodily organization does not prove the non-existence of an immaterial principle; but it would be strangely illogical to infer that there is such a principle merely because there *may* be such an one. That man has a body curiously organized we know,—whether he possesses a soul is the point in dispute, and so must not be taken for granted. That the power of thought has never been found but in connection with this particular

organization we also know. I do think, therefore, that mere philosophical principles would require us to consider the power of thought as the result of this organization, unless it can be shown to be incompatible with other known properties of matter. It might after all be the property of mind; but as we could have no evidence of this, we could not suppose the existence of mind without contravening the philosophical axiom, that we are not to multiply causes or kinds of substance without necessity.

It is therefore necessary for an immaterialist to prove that the powers of sensation and thought are totally incompatible with the known properties of matter; and consequently that there must be a principle essentially distinct from matter in man, which constitutes the basis of our views and feelings,—to which principle we give the name of mind. And this I shall attempt to do in our next lecture.



## . LECTURE V.

### WORKS OF GOD—THE SOUL NOT MATERIAL.

The substance of the argument, that thought and sensation are the result of organization:—incompatibility of thought and sensation with the known or admitted properties of matter:—proof of:—the materialist's only escape:—resorts to exceptions, instances:—conclusion drawn from the instances adduced, and from the preceding discussion:—Locke's opinion:—personal identity incompatible with the materiality of the mind.

§ 1. In my last lecture I gave you a statement of the arguments employed by those who contend that all the phenomena of thought and sensation are the result of bodily organization. The substance of the arguments may be thus stated:—The phenomena to which reference has just been made have invariably been found in connection with a certain organized system of matter, and have never been found without it. "We are bound to suppose, accordingly," says the materialist, "that they are the properties of this particular organization; because the only reason we have for asserting, in any case, that any property belongs to any substance, is the certainty or universality with which we find the substance and the property accompanying

one another." I have allowed to the materialist that we are bound to concede this to him, unless it can be shown that sensation and thought are incompatible with other known properties of matter.

§ 2. Our first argument, then, in support of the immateriality of the human mind, is derived from the incompatibility of thought and sensation with the known or admitted properties of matter. Let me not be misunderstood here. I do not mean to state, that if we could not prove this incompatibility, it would necessarily follow that there is no immaterial principle in man; but that the rules of philosophy, which forbid us to multiply causes without necessity, would not allow us to call in the aid of an immaterial substratum for qualities, when a material one is adequate to their support. Is there then—for that is the point to be decided—any known property of matter with which the powers of sensation and thought are incompatible? I think there is. It is divisibility. Matter is divisible—infinately divisible. And if thought and sensation be properties of matter, they also must be divisible: but they are powers, or properties incapable of division; and therefore they are not properties of matter. On each of these assertions it will be necessary to say a little; but before I proceed to do this, I will request your attention to the common phraseology employed by materialists. The powers of sensation and thought are the result of a particular organization, we are told. Now I am far from saying that this phraseology was employed with a view to throw an obscurity over the subject, which might render it more difficult for an opponent to grapple with, and to overthrow their tenets; but unquestionably such is its tendency and influence. Why not say at once that sensation and thought are the properties of matter?

Or if this be thought too general, the properties of a certain portion and arrangement of matter—of the brain, for instance,—if they consider that the seat of thought? They do not altogether avoid this mode of expression indeed; but they employ it very charily. The words do come out, sometimes, in the heat and unguardedness of discussion; but they do not constitute the chosen, and favourite, and common phraseology. Sensation and thought are not the properties of matter, but the results of organization. And what is organization that is thus exhibited as the substratum of qualities so noble? What is it, when applied to matter, but a disposition or arrangement of parts? Now a disposition of parts can never be the basis of qualities,—that basis must be sought for in the parts themselves. To say that sensation and thought are the results of organization is, either to say that they are the properties of the matter thus organized, or disposed, or arranged,—or it is to utter nonsense. If then man does not possess an immaterial principle, the vital properties we are now considering must reside in the whole matter of the human body, organized as we perceive it is, or in a part of it; since the idea of its residing in the organization itself—*i. e.* in the disposition or arrangement of its substance, and not in the substance itself—is absurd. Do then, we ask, the powers of sensation and thought reside in, or are they the properties of, the whole mass of matter composing the human frame? Few will assert this. If it were admitted that we can feel, none will presume to assert that we can think, in the slightest degree, with our fingers or toes. The power of thought, then, resides in the brain, we are told. That is, it must mean, let it be observed, in harmony with the above remarks, it is a property of the matter or substance of

the brain; since to affirm that it resides in the organization of the brain, *i. e.* in the arrangement or disposition of its parts, distinct from the brain itself, is to utter downright nonsense. And now we come to the application of the principles which were stated a short time ago, to show that thought and sensation cannot be a property of matter: for since the brain, like all other portions of matter, is divisible, sensation and thought, if properties of the brain, must be divisible also; and there must be an infinite number of little feelings and little thoughts in the brain, corresponding with the infinite number of particles of which it is composed; which will hereafter be shown to be absurd. It is only the second step in this process of argument that even seems to require anything in the way of support. That the brain is divisible all must allow. That if sensation and thought are properties of the brain, they must necessarily be divisible also. This inference would appear equally self-evident: and yet a materialist must deny this, or his system falls at once; for though we can easily conceive of the quarter of a brain, the quarter of a sensation is a thing utterly inconceivable. In support then of this second step in our process of reasoning, viz. that the divisibility of thought and sensation necessarily follows upon the admitted divisibility of matter, if, I mean, thought and sensation are properties of matter, we must dwell a little more at length.

§ 3. The following is the medium of proof. The powers or properties of any portion of matter, either organized or unorganized, are in all cases the sum total of the powers and properties of its parts. There can, accordingly, be no powers or properties in the whole which are not in the parts: if the parts have no properties of a particular nature, neither can the whole

have any; if the parts had no properties at all, the whole could have none. It follows, accordingly, that if the particles of the brain do not possess the power of thought and sensation, the whole of the brain cannot possess it: or, conversely, that since, according to the material hypothesis, the whole brain does possess this power, the parts of it must possess the same power; and consequently that sensation and thought are divisible; or, in other words, that the indivisible power of sensation is a divisible power—nay, an infinitely divisible power, if matter be, as philosophers generally allow, an infinitely divisible substance,—a conclusion obviously and grossly ridiculous.

§ 4. There is no method for a materialist to escape from the pressure of this reasoning—and to retain his opinions at least—but by denying that the powers of the whole system are the sum or aggregate of the powers of all its parts; or by admitting, in opposition to our very consciousness, the divisibility of feeling, of which we can form no conception. The materialist does the former. He plunges into an absurdity, it is true, by attacking this canon of thought; for to assert, as it has been properly observed, that the power of the whole is the sum or aggregate of the powers of all the parts, is to give utterance to an identical or self-evident proposition, the whole and all the parts being perfectly synonymous. However, he does attack it; and therefore we must notice by what means, and with what success.

The general truth of this metaphysical axiom is not, and cannot be denied. The hardness, or softness, or elasticity of the mass, is the hardness, or softness, or elasticity of the particles of which it consists. The power of attraction which the mass possesses is the sum

total of the attractive power of its ultimate particles; it cannot be, in the nature of things, either a grain more or a grain less. And I would especially request you to notice this case of illustration, because materialists are ready to reply to their opponents, when alleging the difficulty or impossibility of conceiving that thought and sensation are properties of matter, that it is as easy to conceive of either as that attraction should be a property of matter. Now I, for one, freely admit this. Independently of experience, I should find it as difficult to conceive that matter should possess the property of acting upon another piece of matter at a distance, and give motion to it, as that matter should think and feel. Yet I find no difficulty in considering attraction a property of matter, because it is not inconsistent with any other known property of matter; it is not, like thought and sensation, indivisible. On the contrary, the power of attraction resides in the ultimate particles of matter. Divide it how you will, you do not destroy the power of its parts. And the attraction of the whole is the attraction of the parts of the whole.

§ 5. Yet though the materialist, is constrained to allow that the properties of the whole are the sum of the properties of the parts generally speaking, he yet imagines that there are some exceptions; and if the case admits of any exception, this he conceives may be one of them. To prove that there are such exceptions, he gives as instances—the rose, which possesses the property of sweetness or fragrance; the violin, the property or power of producing harmony; a globe, the property of sphericity; and *aqua regia*, the property of dissolving gold: though, as he affirms, the component portions of these different organized systems are themselves totally

destitute of the powers and properties here enumerated. It will be necessary to examine these instances separately; when it will appear how little they are adapted to support the cause in defence of which they are brought forwards.

A globe, we are told, possesses the property of sphericity; though not a single particle, amongst that infinite number of which the globe is constituted, is itself of a spherical form. The fallacy of this illustration is so manifest that we cannot but wonder it should ever have been appealed to. "The sphericity of a globe," says an excellent writer, "is evidently the sum or aggregate of the curvilinear or convex parts which compose its surface; and the property of the whole is neither more nor less than the property of all its parts." A certain arrangement of particles here produces precisely the result which we should have expected from their nature and form; and to which each contributes its part. "But this," adds the same author, "can never be regarded as in the remotest manner analogous to the *creation* of the power of perception, in consequence of a certain organical arrangement or disposition of impercipient particles. Though sphericity, indeed, is the property of the entire system; yet every part of the system, if divided, possesses its share of sphericity. But if the percipient principle be divided, what would become of the power of perception?"\*

A violin, it is said, in like manner, possesses the power of producing harmony, though the parts of this instrument are manifestly destitute of it. This statement either springs from ignorance, or it is a mere subterfuge. Harmony is, properly speaking, a sensation of the mind, which is so constituted that two sounds, not

\* *Encyclopædia Britannica*, art. "Metaphysics," p. 576.

in unison, are heard with pleasure, or the contrary. The phrase "the concord of sounds"—the definition given of harmony—means the agreeable sensation they produce. \* The words have no meaning but in reference to a percipient being; without such a being, harmony, in fact, could not exist. This agreeable sensation is produced by certain vibrations of the air: how we know not; nor is it necessary for us now to inquire. These vibrations are the result of the motion which the bow gives to the instrument; and that motion, as a whole, is the sum of the motion of the parts of the instrument. There is no harmony in the violin—harmony exists only in the mind; and to this sensation in the percipient being, every part of the violin by its vibration contributes.

Further: it is said the rose possesses the power of sweetness or fragrance. This illustration I have always considered a peculiarly unfortunate one for our antagonists; for if sweetness could be considered a property of the rose, why should it be denied that every one of its particles is sweet, and that the sweetness of the whole is the aggregate of the sweetness of its parts? The truth is, however, that sweetness is not a quality of matter, and so does not inhere in the rose, but an affection of the mind; and, as it was said a short time ago, if there were no percipient being, there would be no such thing as sweetness. Sweetness is a sensation of the mind produced, in some inexplicable manner, by an effluvia emitted by the rose; while its aggregate is the sum of the effluvia which arises from its various parts.

Lastly: it is said of *aqua regia* that it has the power of dissolving gold; though neither the spirit of salt nor the spirit of nitre, of which it is compounded, separately



possesses that property. Upon this illustration it has been very properly observed, that from the union of these two substances certain new modes of configuration and motion result; and the solution of gold is the consequence of this new arrangement and motion of the parts. But the particles of which the menstrum is composed were always possessed of the properties of figure and motion; and what is styled a new property is clearly nothing more than a new effect of the old properties differently modified. It may be impossible for us to explain how *aqua regia* dissolves gold; and as we know not what gives it its solvent power, we may be unable to show that the elements of that power lie concealed in the separate parts of which it is compounded.

Besides, the illustration fails in another important respect. In the case of chemical unions, where new properties grow out of the combination of different substances—properties which did not seem to be in the component parts (though this is only seeming, as we have noticed,—the elements of this new power being beyond all question in the different ingredients);—in all such cases, I say, the new property or power is diffused throughout the whole mass of the compound formed by the union of the different ingredients. When the spirit of salt and the spirit of nitre are combined, so as to produce the acid which forms a solvent for gold, every particle of this compound possesses a solvent power; and the solvent power of the whole is the sum of the solvent power of its ultimate particles. But how is it with the brain, according to the sentiments of our opponents? The power of sensation and thought, they tell us, is the result of the organization of the brain, *i. e.* of the disposition or arrangement of its parts. Ac-

cording then to their own principles and illustrations, every part of the compound or substance formed by the disposition or arrangement of the parts of the brain ought to possess the power of sensation and thought, in the same way as every particle of the acid formed by the ingredients formerly alluded to possesses the power of dissolving gold: but if this be the case, sensation and thought, being possessed by the ultimate particles of the brain, are clearly divisible; which is absurd. To talk of the powers of sensation and thought existing in the organization, as distinct from the matter organized, is, as we have seen, absurd. To say that thoughts and feelings are not qualities of the particles as they exist simply, but of the whole congeries of particles as existing in one beautiful piece of living mechanism, is little less absurd. For "the whole of which materialists speak, whether they term it a congeries, an organ, or a system of organs, is in fact only the sum of its parts; it is truly nothing in itself. It is a mere name invented by ourselves—a name which we give to a plurality of co-existing objects,—not a new object to be distinguished from the heap. A thousand atoms, near to each other or remote, are only a thousand atoms near or remote;" they do not constitute a kind of mysterious whole, having independent properties. They "are precisely the same atoms, with precisely the same qualities, whether we consider them singly, or divide them in our conception by tens, fifties, hundreds, or give to the whole one comprehensive name, as if a thousand were but a greater unit. There is no principle of unity in *them*; it is the *mind* considering them that gives them all the unity they have, or can have."\*

\* Brown, vol. iv., p. 503.

§ 6. Upon the whole, I am quite disposed to join with the writer of the able article on the Substance of the Human Mind, in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, under the head "Metaphysics," that the materialist may safely be challenged to produce, in the whole compass of nature, a case which bears the least analogy to that which the instances we have been considering are most unphilosophically adduced to prove and to illustrate. It is an absurdity, which transubstantiation itself does not exceed, to maintain that a whole is in reality anything different from its component parts; and all nature rises up in confutation of an assertion so extravagant and monstrous. To affirm that perception can arise from any combination of impercipient particles is as truly ridiculous as to affirm that a combination of the seven primary colours with the four cardinal virtues may constitute a planet. It is equivalent to an assertion that an epic poem might be composed of parallelograms, cones, and triangles. In a word, it is an absurdity not less real, and little less obvious, than that of the blind man, who thought that the idea of a scarlet colour resembled the sound of a trumpet.

The preceding reasoning will have rendered it, I trust, sufficiently manifest that, if thought and sensation be properties of matter, they must be divisible; and, consequently, that it will not be more absurd to speak of the twentieth part of an affirmation, or the quarter of a hope, or the tenth part of a fear, than of the twentieth part of a pound. The whole stress of the argument rests on the assumption that sensation and thought are not divisible; since if that be the case, they cannot be properties of matter which is necessarily divisible, and, as philosophers tell us, infinitely so. And what proof have we that the powers to which I

have so often referred are incapable of division? I reply, the evidence of consciousness. "The true answer," says Dr. Brown, "to the statement of the materialist—the answer which we feel in our hearts on the very expression of the plurality and divisibility of feeling—is, that it assumes what, far from admitting, we cannot even understand; and that with every effort of attention, which we can give to our mental analysis, we are as incapable of forming any conception of what is meant by the quarter of a doubt, or the half of a belief, as of forming to ourselves an image of a circle without a central point, or of a square without a single angle."

§ 7. The great Mr. Locke, though no materialist, seems to have imagined it possible for God to annex the faculties of sensation and thought to some system of matter. He seems to have grounded his opinion of this possibility upon the necessary connection which exists at present between sensations in the mind, and certain impressions produced upon the bodily organs. We can form no conception of the link which binds the two things together; and therefore he appears to have imagined that the annexation of thought to the system of particles itself would be but a slight addition to difficulties which must at any rate be admitted. "He forgets, however," says Dr. Brown, "that a system of particles is but a name for the separate particles which alone have any real existence in nature; that the affirmation of what is contradictory, like plurality and unity, simplicity and complexity, is very different from the mere admission of ignorance; and that, though we may not know any reason for which the Deity has been pleased—at least during our mortal state—to render sensations of our mind dependent on affections of our

nervous system, there is no more absurdity in the affirmation of such a dependence than in the assertion of any other physical connection of events—of material phenomena with material phenomena, or of mental phenomena with other phenomena of mind. If the presence of the moon, at the immense distance of its orbit, can affect the tendency of the particles of water in our ocean, it may be supposed with equal readiness to produce a change in the state of any other existing substance, whether divisible into parts—that is to say, material,—or indivisible—that is to say, mind. But when thought is affirmed to be a quality of a system of particles, or to be one result of many co-existing states of particles, which separately are not thought, something more is affirmed than that of which we are merely ignorant of the reason. A whole is said to be different from all the separate and independent parts of a whole: this is an absurdity. And that which is felt by us as, in its very nature, simple and indivisible, is affirmed to be only a form of that which is, by its very nature, infinitely divisible." It is no daring limitation of the Divine power, to suppose that even Omnipotence cannot give to a system of organs a quality wholly distinct from the qualities of all the separate parts.

§ 8. Our next proof of the immateriality of the thinking principle is drawn from the philosophical doctrine of personal identity. The order of proof here will be the following. First, we are now the same beings, or the identical beings, which we were ten or twenty years ago. Secondly, the particles of matter which compose our bodies are perpetually changing. Thirdly, there must consequently be connected with the body some principle which undergoes

no change, or the consciousness of identity is a lying consciousness.

*First.*—We are now the same, or the identical beings, which we were ten or twenty years ago. To deny or question this is downright insanity. “Much learning doth make thee mad” may be said to any philosopher whose views on any subject are such as to draw from him the expression of a doubt even with reference to it: for the belief that the being who possessed certain thoughts and feelings the last week, or the last year, is the same being who is the subject of them to-day, is an intuitive belief, to which we are impelled by that constitution of mind which our Creator has given to us; or, as we commonly express it, it is a belief built upon consciousness.

“The belief of our identity,” says Dr. Brown, “is not the result of any series of propositions, but arises immediately, in certain circumstances, from a principle of thought, as essential to the very nature of the mind as its powers of perception or memory, or as the power of reasoning itself; on the essential validity of which, and consequently on the intuitive belief of some first truth on which it is founded, every objection to the force of these very truths themselves must ultimately rest.” And again, he tells us that amongst the list of intuitive truths, it will be difficult to find any which has a better claim to this distinction than the faith which we have in our identity, as one continued sentient and thinking being. This faith is universal, irresistible, immediate. On this point no more needs to be said.

*Secondly.*—The particles of matter which compose our bodies are liable to constant flux and change. This is so manifest that few will deny it; and indeed it is

generally admitted that, in 'the course of years, the change is so great that not a single particle which composed the body of the boy may constitute a part of the man. So that—

*Thirdly*,—there must be connected with the body some principle which undergoes no change, or the consciousness of identity would be a lying consciousness. No man, no being, no mode of being, can be the same with that with which it has not anything the same. If the particles which enter into the composition of the human body are then thus perpetually changing, if the material part of the man is not the same with the material part of the boy, and if we are altogether and exclusively material, it is manifestly utterly impossible that the man can be the same being with the boy. Thus there could be no such thing as personal identity; or rather, the consciousness of identity must be a lying consciousness, unless there be connected with the material system an immaterial being—the seat of sensation and thought, and which, amidst all the fluctuations, and wastes, and changes of the mere animal, remains the same.

The difficulty, of reconciling the dogmas of materialism with the testimony of consciousness, in support of personal identity, has been very ludicrously, but very justly, represented by Pope, in his letter of the free-thinkers to Martinus Scriblerus. "The parts," say they, "of an animal body" (stating the objection which they profess to answer) "are perpetually changed, and the fluids, which seem to be the subject of consciousness, are in a perpetual circulation; so that the same individual particles do not remain in the brain: from whence it will follow," they add, (since identity, or the principles of the materialist, is a consciousness of identity,)

“that the idea of individual consciousness must be constantly transferred from one particle of matter to another; whereby the particle A, for instance, must not only be conscious, but conscious that it is the same being with the particle B, that went before.” And after a pretended whimsical reply, they add, “They make a great noise about this individuality,—how a man is conscious to himself that he is the same individual he was twenty years ago, notwithstanding the flux state of the particles of matter that compose his body. We think,” say they, “this is capable of a very plain answer, and may be easily illustrated by a familiar example. Sir John Cutler had a pair of black worsted stockings, which his maid darned so often with silk that they became at last a pair of silk stockings. Now supposing those stockings of Sir John’s endued with some degree of consciousness at every particular darning, they would have been sensible that they were the same individual pair of stockings both before and after the darning; and this sensation would have continued in them through all the succession of darnings: and yet, after the last of all, there was not perhaps one thread left of the first pair of stockings; but they were grown to be silk stockings, as we said before.”

This is a ludicrous representation of the argument, but just. Personal identity must be seated in the body, according to it, since we have no soul. But as the particles of the body are perpetually changing, and are in the course of years entirely changed, personal identity cannot mean sameness of particles. It consists, therefore, in consciousness. But if man consists only of matter, and if that matter is constantly changing, the consciousness which tells the man that he is the same being with the body, though there is not any of the



original particles which composed his body to be found in him, must be a lying consciousness. The particle A, according to the representation of the free-thinkers, taught a lie to B,—viz. that he was the same with A. B forwarded the same lie to C. And so the whole consciousness of life is a deception! Who can believe it?

## LECTURE VI.

### WORKS OF GOD—THE SOUL IMMATERIAL, OBJECTIONS.

Philosophical objections a preliminary statement:—*first* objection, things must have common properties to act on each other:—*second* objection, the apparent extinction of thought and sensation:—*third* objection, the phenomena of thinking inexplicable on the immaterial principle:—The testimony of Scripture:—the *first* class of passages, those that intimate generally a distinction between matter and mind:—*second* class, those that affirm or imply the existence of the soul after the body dies:—*third* class, those that exhibit the souls of departed saints in their separate state:—the specific testimony of John.

§ 1. BEFORE we enter upon an investigation of the doctrine of Scripture with reference to the nature of the human mind, I think it right to lay before you some of the more prominent of the philosophical objections which have been urged against our preceding statements, as well as to put you in possession of the best method of repelling them. You will find a most able article on the Substance of the Human Mind, in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, under the head “Metaphysics,” to which I do most earnestly request your particular attention. It enters more at large upon the subject than I can possibly do in this course of lectures. I shall, however, extract a few of its statements, as some of you may not, after

you leave the Academy, have easy access to the work; accompanying the able reasonings of the writer of that article with any remarks which may occur to my own mind.

§ 2. The substance of the first argument against the immateriality of the soul may be thus stated.

Nothing can act upon any other thing, unless it have some property in common with it.

If the soul be immaterial, it has no property in common with matter; for that is what we mean by its being immaterial.

The soul, therefore, cannot act upon matter, or the body.

But we know that the soul does act upon the body: consequently the soul is not immaterial.

The validity of this reasoning depends upon the truth of the major proposition, viz. that nothing can act upon any other thing, unless it have some property in common with it. Were it true, it would doubtless overthrow the doctrine which has been stated; but if it be false, what becomes of the objection to it? And that it is false is proved, by the fact that we move our limbs by a mere energy of will. It is not to be doubted that the will acts upon the muscles of the body. It follows, either that the will has some property in common with matter—which is absurd,—or that the muscles are endowed with will—which is not less absurd; or that one thing may act upon another thing, although it has not one property in common with it. And why should this be affirmed to be absurd and impossible? We are apt to imagine, we can easily conceive how one thing can act upon another which possesses common properties with it—how matter can act upon matter in contact with it; but we are guilty of self-deception here. The fact is,

we know no more of the *modus operandi* in these last cases, than of the manner in which volition raises or depresses a muscle. Experience is our only teacher and guide here. We know that matter can operate upon matter, especially when the parts are in contact; because we have seen it, and therefore are prone to imagine there is no difficulty in the case: but the truth is, that we are just as unable to explain how matter acts upon matter in contact with it as how spirit acts upon matter; we mistake the rules or laws of operation, for the reason or cause of operation. And I have no doubt in the least, that if we had had no experience on either point, we should find no more difficulty in conceiving that spirit may operate upon matter, or matter upon spirit, than that matter should operate upon matter in contact with it.

§ 3. A second objection against the immateriality of the soul is derived from the occasional apparent extinction of thought and sensation. In perfect sleep, under the operation of a strong narcotic, of swooning, of apoplexy, or of a violent blow upon the head, there is neither perception, recollection, judgment, nor volition; and therefore the conclusion is, the soul is not immaterial. It would seem difficult at first view to discover the link by which they connect this conclusion with the previous premises. How does the apparent occasional extinction of the mental power prove anything concerning the nature of the substratum in which they inhere? How does it go to show that this substratum must be material, and not immaterial? Might we not say to a materialist, "Your alleged occasional extinction of sensation and thought proves merely that the substratum of these properties sometimes expires for a season, and then is quickened to life again—before it becomes permanently

extinct, but leaves us utterly in the dark as to its nature, whether material or the contrary?" He might reply—though I am now doing him the favour to state the objection more fully and forcibly than he has done it for himself—that the injury in all the cases supposed having been sustained by the body, and the bodily organization, and that producing, as it does, such injurious effects upon the properties of thought and sensation, we are authorized to consider them the mere results of that organization: if they had their seat in an immaterial principle, which could sustain no injury, even by a force which completely destroys the animal frame, how could they be effected by any operation upon that frame? This objection loses sight of an admission we have more than once made, that the brain, and a certain state of the brain, may be necessary as an instrument by which the mind performs its operations, while it is not the mind itself. The musician does not die when the strings of his instrument are broken, though he can no longer pour on our ears the same delightful strains of melody. "As light is necessary to vision," says the writer in the *Encyclopædia*, "but is not itself either the thing which sees or the thing which is seen; so may the brain be necessary to the phenomena of thinking, without being either that which thinks or that which is thought upon: and as actual vision ceases when light is withdrawn, though the eye and the object both continue to exist; so may the energy of thinking cease when the brain is rendered unfit for its usual office, though the being which thinks, and the power of thought, continue to exist, and to exist unimpaired."

§ 4. The next objection seems, at first view, more formidable. It is thus stated by Mr. Cooper.

"It appears no more than reasonable," says he,

“that if the doctrine of materialism be rejected as inadequate to explain the phenomena, these latter should at least be explained, in some way or another, better upon the *substituted* than upon the *rejected* hypothesis; so that it is reasonable to require of an immaterialist that his supposition of a distinct soul should explain the *rationale* of the phenomena of thinking. But, strange to say, so far from attempting to explain these phenomena on the immaterial hypothesis, it is acknowledged, on all hands, that even on this hypothesis the phenomena are inexplicable.” In the same manner reasons Mr. Lawrence: “Some hold that an immaterial principle is superadded to the structure of the body, and enables it to exhibit vital phenomena. This explanation,” he sneeringly adds, “may be of use to those who are conversant with immaterial beings, and who understand how they are connected with and act on matter.” It is marvellous that so acute a writer, as the author of the article to which I have so often referred you, should imagine he replies to this objection of Cooper, by quoting an admission of that gentleman that no materialist ever undertook to say how perception results from organization. The very gist of Mr. Cooper’s argument is, that since the immaterialist, as well as the materialist, is unable to explain the *rationale* of thought, it is unphilosophical to reject the doctrines of the latter, because they will not account for the phenomena, and to embrace those of the former, which leaves them equally unaccounted for. It is obvious that the only reply to this objection is, that we do not embrace the doctrine of the immateriality of the soul, because it more fully explains the phenomena of sensation and thought than the dogmas of materialism; but because these phenomena are utterly irreconcilable with the scheme of material-

ism. The hypothesis of both parties contains something which is totally inexplicable to men: but the hypothesis of the materialist is burdened with the contradiction, that the whole is different from all its parts; and this is the precise ground on which it is rejected.

§ 5. *Secondly.*—*Having now passed in review the philosophical arguments in favour of this most important principle, we pass on to produce the testimony of Scripture in support of the immateriality of the soul.*

It was stated at the commencement of this investigation, that if the philosophical argument should fail us, the failure would only be adapted to excite increased gratitude to God for that revelation which has set the question concerning the substance of the human mind—where there is not a lamentable want of candour at least—completely at rest. I have no want of confidence, however, even in the philosophical argument: on the contrary, there are few conclusions in mental or moral science, arrived at without the aid of Divine revelation, on the correctness of which my mind reposes with more firm and unwavering trust, than that matter cannot possess the totally incompatible qualities of sensation, thought, and divisibility.

Still more unequivocal, however, is the testimony of Scripture upon this point, which we now proceed to consider. The order of proof is the following. First, I shall lay before you those passages which seem to point generally to a distinction existing between matter and mind, flesh and spirit, and which intimate that man is compounded of both. Secondly, I shall refer you to those declarations which either expressly affirm, or clearly imply, that the soul will continue to exist after the body dies. Thirdly, I shall direct you to certain parts of the inspired volume, in which the souls of

departed saints are clearly exhibited to us in their separate state. Thus the proof will rise in conclusiveness as we proceed. It commences with probability; it concludes with absolute certainty.

§ 6. *First*.—Then I am to lay before you those passages which seem to point generally to a distinction existing between matter and mind, flesh and spirit, and which intimate that man is compounded of both. In the thirty-first chapter of Isaiah, and the third verse, we meet with the following words: “Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit.” “Here,” says Dwight, “a distinction between flesh or body, and spirit, is so plainly, as well as so intentionally marked, that the passage can need no comment.” I think it, however, very possible that an opponent would say,—the latter clause, “and their horses flesh and not spirit,” is merely exegetical of the former: that the prophet only intended to affirm that their horses were not powerful, or spirit, like God, and so not to be trusted in; but weak, or flesh, like themselves. And this is perhaps indeed the meaning of the passage. Yet still it may be asked, How should the terms flesh or body have come to be used as synonymous with weakness, and the word spirit as synonymous with power, if there were no distinction between flesh and spirit? yea, if flesh were not passive inert matter, and spirit alone possessed of active energy? On any other supposition but this, such a use of the terms as we find in the passage we are considering would be inexplicable—yea, inconceivable. And as this declaration proves that there is a distinction between matter and mind, flesh and spirit, so there are others which intimate that man is compounded of both.

In the seventh verse of the second chapter of Genesis, we are told that the Lord God breathed into man “the



breath of life," or of lives; "and man became a living soul." What is the meaning of this remarkable phraseology? Does it intend merely that Jehovah inspired into the nostrils of the beautiful but inanimate machine which his hands had made—that his lungs were thereby inflated—and that he began to exhibit immediately all the phenomena of life? But why—it is obvious to ask, if the communication of the vital principle be all that is intended here—why should the word be plural? why should it be said, he breathed into him "the breath of lives?" Will it be said that he communicated the rational principle, as well as the animal life,—and that that accounts for the use of the plural term? But what is the rational principle—and indeed what is the animal life, or the vital principle—it may be asked, which was thus communicated to the already completed, organized frame? They are, according to the statements of our opponents, the properties of matter—the results of organization. If that were the case, why, I ask, did they need to be breathed into, or added to the frame already organized? If sensation and thought were the natural and inseparable qualities or properties of the particles of dust of which the body of Adam was composed,—which is absurd; or, that not being the case, if they are the results of organization,—words which mean the same thing, as we have seen, or which are unmeaning;—in either of these cases there would have been no necessity, no room for God to breathe into the organized machine, and so convey the animal and rational lives, as we are told he did, for the plain reason that they would have been there before. If not in the original particles, the organization of those particles must have communicated them; since to organize and to give life—if the vital properties are the result of organization—are perfectly

synonymous expressions.\* To speak of adding life to an organized frame, if the vital properties are the result of organization, and as Lawrence states the animal organs are essentially vital, is absurd. We might as well consider divisibility an essential property of matter; and then talk of God creating matter, and afterwards adding divisibility to it. I am thoroughly persuaded that there is no way of understanding the inspired description of the addition of life to a bodily frame already organized, but by supposing that the vital properties—that sensation and thought and rationality are the exclusive properties of an immaterial principle, which was communicated to the dead and inert matter of which the body of Adam was composed; and that since this one principle contains or exhibits many properties, the historian has employed the plural term, and said that the Lord God breathed into Adam “the breath of lives.”

Ecclesiastes xii. 7: “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.” That the term dust here means the body, there can be no doubt; what then are we to understand by the spirit? If the intention of the speaker be not to affirm that there is a spirit in man, which when set free from the body ascends immediately to God, what can his meaning be? The body and the bodily organization are all that belong to man, if he be destitute of an immaterial principle; and the body, we are assured, returns to the earth as it was. What is there left then to return to God? What is that spirit which is said to ascend to him? Is it the breath? But what is the breath? What is it but the air by which we are encompassed, alternately inspired and expired by the lungs? That that does not return to God, we are physically certain. It is the life, then, we shall perhaps be

told. But what, I ask again, 'is the life? "It is the state of the animal," says one of the latest advocates of materialism, "in which the continuance of the vital processes of the animal organs is evidenced by obvious external signs." To talk of this state of an animal returning to God is 'ineffably absurd. Life, again we are told, is the result of organization,—it is a property of matter. But how can a property of matter return to God, while the matter itself is left behind? The properties of matter are inseparable from the matter itself. We can indeed, by a mental process, conceive of them as detached from it; and this operation gives existence to what we call "abstract nouns;" but that operation is only a mental, not a real one. The properties, which we make for the time the exclusive objects of our thoughts, still inhere in their substances; they cannot be separated from them. And if the term spirit in this passage means life, and if life is a property of matter, or the result of organization—for that is the same term,—it is impossible that it should be taken to God without the body itself. It would not be less absurd to say that Jehovah can annihilate matter, but take its properties, divisibility, elasticity, &c., to himself.

Will it be said, as a last resort, that no definite idea need be sought for the phrase "the spirit shall return unto God who gave it,"—that the whole declaration implies no more than that God, at the destined moment, takes away the life which first he gave? I answer, first, if this be all that the sacred writer intended to convey, it will be difficult to absolve him from the charge of using words calculated to deceive, since his language is manifestly adapted to convey more. I answer, secondly, that a parallel declaration of the same writer, in the third chapter, verse 21, illustrates

the meaning of this, and shows that, by the whole passage, something more than the mere extinction of life is to be understood: "Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?" By the spirit returning to God who gave it, and ascending upward, we are manifestly to understand the same thing. The word "spirit" cannot accordingly mean the life. Nor can the ascending of the spirit to God mean the taking away of life: for in that case, as he takes away the life of the beast as well as the life of man, it would follow, on this interpretation, that the spirit of the beast returns to God; whereas the inspired writer assures us that it descends downwards towards the earth. No consistent meaning can be attached to the expressions, unless it be supposed that the word spirit in both cases is intended to denote an immaterial principle—or soul, properly so called; and that the intention of the preacher, in the latter passage, is to teach us that the soul of man will exist for ever, while the souls of brutes are destined to perish with their bodies.

In Psalm xxxi. 5, David says, "Into thine hand I commit my spirit." These words were repeated by the Saviour on the cross, immediately before he expired. In the same manner Stephen, before his death, prayed unto Christ, saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." I have purposely reserved these passages to the close of my quotations under this head of proof. Had we considered them in the first instance, it might have been more difficult to prove that the word "spirit" is not to be understood in the sense of life; but after the instances adduced, in which it must be supposed to refer to an immaterial principle, distinct from the body, there can be no doubt that such is its meaning here. Having

thus proved that the soul is distinct from the body, I pass on—

§ 7. *Secondly*, — to refer you to those declarations which either expressly affirm, or clearly imply, that the soul will continue to exist after the body dies.

I am aware that I have in some measure anticipated myself here. For the last three passages—though referred to by me to prove that man is compounded of matter and mind—do clearly teach us that the soul will continue to exist after the death of the body; and it was impossible to avoid altogether alluding to this, in the illustration and establishment of the particular point which the state of the argument then required, viz. that there is in man an immaterial principle. I shall not refer to these texts again, but proceed to the mention of others, from which it may be gathered with infallible certainty that the existence of the soul is prolonged after the death of the body.

“To day,” said the Saviour to the thief on the cross, “shalt thou be with me in paradise.” That the body of the thief did not go with the Saviour to paradise that day is certain. It was destined to repose in the grave till the resurrection; and the resurrection is even yet far distant. Our Lord must have meant, therefore, that his spirit, or soul, should ascend thither with him; and since it is the immaterial and immortal part that constitutes the man—the body being only the vestment of the soul—our Lord might properly use the personal pronoun, and say, “To day shalt *thou* be with me in paradise.”

“The objectors to this doctrine,” says Dwight, “have attempted to escape from the irresistible force of this text by two comments.” The first is, “that the words ‘To day’ refer to the time of our Saviour’s speaking, and

not to the time when the thief was to be with him in paradise." Well might our author indignantly call this "a pitiful subterfuge!" Nothing, I feel convinced, but the necessities of a system, could lead any man to suppose that our Lord should deem it necessary gravely to assure him that he was speaking to him at the moment in which the words fell from his lips, and neither the day before nor the day after.

The other explanation is, "that as in the eternity of God one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day, Christ meant by the words 'To day' the same thing with that eternity." On this comment we need only ask, with an excellent writer, "Whether the dying Saviour spoke to the dying man language which he intended he should understand,—or whether he spoke to him language which he could not possibly understand, and by which Christ knew he would certainly be deceived?"

In his Epistle to the Philippians, the first chapter, verse 21, Paul says, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." How can this passage, I ask, be reconciled with the dogmas of materialism? After death, according to that system, there is a total extinction or suspension of being till the resurrection. How could then an inspired apostle, possessing as he did a heart glowing with zeal for the glory of God, and the salvation of men, deem it better to descend and rot in the grave, and remain in a state of inglorious inactivity, rather than to remain at the post of usefulness? The sentiments of our opponents involve one of the foulest libels, upon the character of one of the most ardent and devoted servants of Christ whose name occurs in the annals of the church. They suppose that he who, on another occasion, could say, in the face of danger and of death, "And none of these

things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God," now fell under the influence of the basest pusillanimity, and could have sneaked cowardly away from the face of danger, rather than encounter it for the sake of the Master whom he loved. There is no symptom of an inglorious weakness of this kind in the language of the apostle. The strait in which he was placed was not, whether he should take shelter in the grave from the assaults of his adversaries, or remain and resolve like a man to go forth and meet them. No. The difficulty of decision by which he was embarrassed was, whether he should continue to serve Christ on earth, or go to enjoy his presence in heaven. The language of the apostle exhibits anything but pusillanimity; and it is to the everlasting disgrace of our adversaries to charge him with it. It manifests, on the contrary, the most ardent devotion to the great cause of God and truth. Nothing could have tempted him to think, even for a moment, of leaving his post, but the prospect of being with Christ in heaven; and even that he was willing to forego for a season—to remain out of heaven—to bare his breast to the full storm of persecution—that he might serve the Redeemer in the world. In complete harmony with these remarks, we find him stating, in the twenty-third verse, that the gain he expected to derive from death was not the inactivity, and shelter, and unconsciousness of the tomb, but the enjoyment of the presence of Christ in heaven: "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." This presence with Christ must be the presence of his spirit, in a disembodied state; for he well knew that his flesh

would rest in the grave till the last day. These statements are powerfully confirmed by his language in another epistle. "Therefore," says he, in the fifth chapter of his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, verses 6 and 8, "we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent in the Lord. We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."

"In this passage," Dwight very justly remarks, "the apostle declares expressly, that to be at home in the body is to be absent from the Lord; and to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord." But, according to the scheme which I am opposing, the body is the whole man; and therefore if the man is ever to be present with the Lord, his body must be present; and if his body be absent, the man must be absent also, in direct contradiction to the assertion of the apostle. To be absent from the body is, on this plan, phraseology without meaning, because there is nothing but body. This passage is, therefore, an explicit declaration that man is something besides body, distinct from it, capable of being separated or being absent from it, and, in consequence of this separation, of being present with the Lord. This something he elsewhere declares to be conscious, and capable of enjoyment; for he says that to be thus present with Christ is a far better state than the present. This something then, thus capable of being absent from the body, is an immaterial spirit; for besides body or matter, our opponents will allow that there is nothing except spirit.

§ 8. *Thirdly.*—I proceed to direct your attention to certain parts of the inspired volume, in which the souls of departed saints are clearly exhibited to us in their separate state.



The first instance I bring is the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. "This parable," says the same writer, "is the most explicit declaration of the doctrine for which we contend. In it Dives and Lazarus are both asserted to have died, and to have entered the future world as separate spirits, while the five brethren of Dives were living, and of course while their bodies were both masses of putrefaction in the grave. No example can be clearer, and more unexceptionable than this."

If it be objected that this is a parable, Dwight has very justly replied, "that though the truth of a parable does not require the reality of the persons, or the historical facts which it contains, yet it does demand that of the doctrines contained in it, unless we say that Christ, in the parables, is a teacher of falsehood."

The next instances I quote entire from Dwight.

"In the fourth chapter of the Book of Revelations, John saw four-and-twenty elders surrounding the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. In the seventh chapter, he informs us that he beheld a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palms in their hands, uniting with the angels, the elders, and the four living ones in the worship of God, and the everlasting ascription of praise and glory to his name. Upon this he asked the angel interpreter, who these persons were? The angel informed him that they were those who came out of great tribulation, and who had washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; that therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; that they shall neither hunger, nor thirst, nor suffer any

more; but shall be fed by the Lamb with living bread, and led unto the fountains of living water. No ingenuity of interpretation, no skill at evasion, will enable any man to satisfy even himself, if he will take all the parts of these accounts together, that they can mean anything less or more than that these persons were all separate spirits. Elders are men; those who are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb are men; and can be no other than men. Men who are around the throne of God, and before his throne; who are brought out of great tribulation; who serve him day and night in his temple; who hunger, thirst, and suffer no more; who feed on the bread and drink the water of life; and who sustain all these characters, and do all these things, while the world yet remains, and many ages before its termination, are men in the heavens. They are therefore the bodies of men, or their separate spirits. I leave my antagonists to choose which side of the alternative they please."

§ 9. "But if a doubt can remain, John has himself settled it; for in the sixth chapter, verses 9 and 11, he says, 'And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and white robes were given unto every one of them.' The like phraseology is also used in Rev. xx. 4. Now, let me ask, what was it which John saw? That they were persons, or intelligent beings, cannot be doubted; that they have been once slain, and are therefore men, is equally certain; that they are glorified persons is also certain; that they are souls, or separate spirits, is certain; because the apostle has said so, and the spirit of God has said so. It is therefore true. It is also certain, from the whole account given by the Scriptures at large

concerning this subject; for we know that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Should it be said that these things passed in vision, and that they were not real exhibitions of facts,—the book being a symbolical representation, and not a real account of facts; I answer, that I have no difficulty in granting it, although I have not a doubt that every one of the things which I have mentioned was strictly a matter of fact. At the same time, the argument stands on the same basis upon either schemes. If the representation be considered as strictly symbolical, still the doctrines which it contains are all exactly true. This is all for which I contend; and this must be conceded by my opponents, unless they are willing to charge God with having taught falsehood to mankind.”\*

\* Dwight, vol. i., p. 182.

## LECTURE .VII.

### WORKS OF GOD—TIME, MANNER, AND OBJECT OF CREATION.

The subject of the lecture:—the time consumed in the work itself:—period of time consumed, a source of instruction:—the creation of the material world, an emblem of the spiritual:—the Sabbath:—period elapsed since creation:—infidel objections, derived from the chronology of creation, answered:—the time of the year in which creation took place:—manner of creation:—the object of creation.

§ 1. FOURTHLY.—HAVING SAID WHAT I DESIGNED ON THE THINGS AND THE BEINGS TO WHOM EXISTENCE WAS IMPARTED, I NOW DIRECT YOUR ATTENTION TO THE TIME OF CREATION.

In this lecture I intend to consider the following things; though they do not very well arrange themselves under the general title given to it. 1. The time which was occupied in the work itself. 2. The period which has elapsed since its completion. 3. The season of the year in which it may be supposed to have taken place. I will also add a few observations on the manner in which Jehovah created the visible universe, and on the object he had in view.

§ 2. FIRST.—The time which was occupied in the work itself. On this point, the language of the sacred writer is very explicit: “For in six days the Lord made

heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day." This declaration refers, however, you will immediately see, only to what Parkhurst calls "the creation of form." The substance or matter of the universe must, in the very nature of the case, have been produced in an instant. The transition from not being to being cannot be a protracted work,—it can occupy no time. The volition of Deity was immediately followed by the appearance of that misshapen mass, over which there were afterwards thrown forms of such inimitable beauty. And a being who can create *substance* by a word must have been able, no one can doubt, to do what is incomparably less difficult—to produce *form*. That the production of the particular form and order which the universe now bears occupied the Deity six days, when its proper creation did not cost him a moment, is a fact for which different conjectural reasons may be assigned; but it would be unspeakably and ineffably absurd to ascribe it to defective power in the great Eternal. What may be said here is to be considered merely in the light of hints, upon a subject concerning which only partial information is given in the word of God. I observe—

§ 3. *First*,—that the creation of the world in six days, rather than in a moment, contributed to render it a far more intelligible and instructive event than would otherwise have been the case. Had the work of creation been instantaneously performed, it would have been totally incomprehensible even by the angels, who were witnesses of it; and the history of it would have been entirely useless by ourselves, except merely as settling the point that the world was created. The first verse of the Bible would have contained the whole. Nor could anything have been added to it with propriety,

unless that God called the universe into existence by his word. How much more interesting, comprehensive, and delightful is the whole chapter in which that verse is contained! In a far higher proportion was the actual progress and order of this great work intelligible, interesting, and delightful to the *sans of God*, who were witnesses of its accomplishment. They saw and understood much of what was done; we read, and understand not a little. There can, surely, be no doubt that the account of the creation, as it is given us by Moses,—in which we see the substance of the heavens and the earth first springing up in the solitude of eternity,—then the darkness which hovered over it rapidly dispersing,—the waters afterwards retreating into their prepared beds, and the dry land, covered with verdure and fertility, rising into view,—and finally myriads of animated beings exulting in the new-born joys of existence, with one exalted creature, the image of his Maker, appointed to guard and to govern them, at their head;—there can be no doubt, I say, that the account of these glorious and successive changes, these repeated acts of creation—all accomplished by the mere word of the great Eternal—conveys to our minds a far more impressive conviction of the amazing power of the Creator than if the historian had had it to say, that in the beginning the heavens and the earth were created in a perfect state by Jehovah. On this account, therefore, some time was probably determined to be spent in the work of creation.

§ 4. *Secondly*.—I think also there is some foundation for the sentiment, that the material creation was intended to be an emblem of the new creation of a soul to God, and of the progress of his spiritual kingdom in the world. This world of accountable and immortal beings—made up, as it is, of individual beings whose

minds are naturally spiritually dark—is in a state of moral chaos, till God says, “Let there be light.” The spiritual kingdom of Christ is formed out of materials without form, morally considered, and void: yet, when brought to perfection, will it prove a most bright and glorious monument of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; and will so vastly exceed the former creation in importance, duration, worth, beauty, and glory, that the former work will be forgotten, and not be worthy of mention in comparison of the latter. Such is the representation which the apostle Peter gives of it. Speaking of the dissolution of this material fabric, he says, “Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

The gradual increase and advance of light and order, in creating and forming the natural material world, is analogous to the increase of light and order in the moral world, particularly in the work of redemption, and an emblem of it. This light began to dawn immediately after the fall of man, and has been increasing ever since; and will continue to increase till the Sun of Righteousness—the sun of the moral world, of whom the natural sun is our emblem—shall arise upon all nations, with healing in his beams; and “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea,”—when the church shall arise, and put on her morally beautiful garments, and shine in the beauty of holiness.

Some have further supposed, that the circumstance of Jehovah employing six days in the work of creation, and resting the seventh, was a designed emblem of the length of time which was to intervene before the Millennium,—a day being put, as is common in prophetic language, for a thousand years. During the space of six thousand years, Christ is carrying on the work of re-

demption, and forming his church and kingdom, out of the chaotic mass of mankind, to a state of order and beauty, through various revolutions and conflicts, when it shall be brought to a state of rest and peace: and the seventh thousand years of the world shall be a day of rest and peace, when the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heavens, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; and the church shall put on her beautiful garments, "prepared as a bride is adorned for her husband;" and the Lord her God will rejoice over her with joy; he will rest in his love, and will joy over her with singing.

§ 5. *Thirdly.*—We are more removed from the regions of conjecture, when we say, that by means of this order of creation, the Sabbath, the great source of piety, was ushered into the world with a solemnity unrivalled and infinite. "God rested," say the sacred writers, "from all his work which he created and made."—"The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." This has ever appeared to me the grand reason why time was employed at all, and especially the particular space of six days, for the full accomplishment of the work of creation. Determining, as Jehovah did, that every seventh day should be kept holy to himself,—a determination which rests on the basis of moral obligation, whether reason can perceive that basis or not,—and perceiving, as he did, that inveterate depravity which would soon take possession of the being he was about to form in his own image,—he resolved, we may reasonably conclude, to devote six days to the work of creation, and to rest the seventh, that he might thereby supply a motive of most powerful efficacy to the observance of a duty, on which so much



of the comfort of the world in general, as well as the spiritual welfare of his own people depends.

§ 6. SECONDLY.—We proceed to consider the period which has elapsed since the creation. On this point, the accounts of profane history are a mass of confusion and contradictions; we may reject them all as fables: and the fables of historians, it has been well and justly observed, scarce merit even so much attention as the hypotheses of philosophers. Nor do even the Sacred Scriptures fix the era of creation with precision; doubtless, because it is after all a matter of subordinate importance for us to know how long the world has existed. The Hebrew copy of the Bible, which we Christians, for good reasons, consider as the most authentic, say the writers of the *Universal History*, dates the creation of the world 3944 years before the Christian era. The Samaritan Bible, again, fixes the era of the creation 4305 years before the birth of Christ. And the Greek translation, known by the name of the Septuagint version of the Bible, gives 5270 as the number of the years which intervened between those two periods. As many other different calculations of the years, contained in the same intermediate space of time, might be formed upon other dates in the sacred volume, differing in the different copies. By comparing the various dates in the sacred writings, examining how these have come to disagree, and to be diversified in different copies, endeavouring to reconcile the most authentic profane with sacred chronology, and eking out deficiency of dates and evidence with conjecture,—some ingenious men have formed schemes of chronology, plausible indeed, but not supported by sufficient authorities, which they would gladly persuade us to receive in preference to any of those above mentioned. Usher makes out, from the Hebrew

Bible, 4004 years as the term between the creation and the birth of Christ. Josephus, according to Dr. Wills, and Mr. Whiston, makes it 4658 years; and M. Pezron, with the help of the Septuagint, extends it to 5872 years. Usher's system is the most generally received.

But though these different systems of chronology vary so much from each other, yet the differences between them are so inconsiderable, in comparison with those which arise before us when we contemplate the chronology of the Chinese, the Chaldeans, and the Egyptians, and they agree so well with the general information of authentic history, and with the appearances of nature and of society, that they may be considered as nearly fixing the true period of the creation of the world.\*

§ 7. I should not have noticed the date of the creation at all, were it not that I wished to touch upon two infidel objections which have been urged against the Bible, in consequence of what are conceived to be its statements upon this point.

1. The first is derived from the unreasonableness, as these objectors imagine, of the world's having existed for 6000 years only. "Can it be supposed," say they, "that God existed so many millions of ages alone, and began the work of creating only six thousand years ago?" To this question, I answer—

*First.*—That it is inconsistent and absurd, and can really have no meaning. Antecedent to the beginning of time, there could be no succession from one minute or hour to another, for minutes and hours relate only to time. There was no *before* or *after*, *sooner* or *later*. Antecedent to the creation of time, there was no existence but the Creator. And to the eternity of Him

with whom one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day—who inhabiteth eternity—whose duration is an omnipresent Now—our successive existence, and the periods by which it is reckoned, have no reference whatever. To Him time and date have no relation, and are obviously nothing. It may therefore with truth be affirmed, that the world could not have been created *sooner* than it was, or *before* it was actually created; because there was no succession, and therefore nothing sooner or later, before or after, antecedent to creation. I answer, in the words of Dwight—

*Secondly.*—That if the world had been created at the commencement of any imaginable past period—suppose a billion of years,—at the end of 6000 years from its first creation, the same objection would have been made against the date of its existence, with exactly the same force. It might then have been asked, with exactly the same propriety, “Can it be supposed that God existed so many millions of ages alone, and began the work of creating only six thousand years ago?” The objectors appear not to perceive that, by receding into past duration, they approach no nearer to a goal; but that, while they amuse themselves with the dream of advancing towards a satisfactory limit, the same vast eternity still expands immeasurably before them. I answer—

*Thirdly.*—That since the creation of the world from eternity has been proved to be impossible, there must have been a time—conceding to the objector that to speak of time in this manner is not absurd,—there must have been a time before which it could not have existed. There must have been a time, then, when the world had only existed 6000 years, even though it was created as soon as it could be created, and have a beginning,

How then does the objector know that he does not live in that period, and that the world was not created as early as his question demands? I answer—

*Fourthly.*—That the determination of the era of the existence of the world to a period about 6000 years ago does not necessarily involve the supposition that Jehovah existed alone before it was brought into being. For all that, either reason or Scripture teaches to the contrary, myriads of worlds may have existed before the earth was created; or, at any rate, before it received its present form and appearance. The correctness of this assertion will, perhaps, more clearly appear in our reply to the second objection, against what seem, at any rate, to be the Bible statements concerning the age of the world, viz.—

2. That there are appearances upon the surface of the earth, as well as in the composition and arrangement of the interior strata of the globe, which prove that the period of the earth's origin is much more remote than even six, or ten, or twenty thousand years ago. The objection chiefly rests on certain geological speculations concerning the length of time required for the formation of a soil sufficient for the nourishment and growth of vegetables upon volcanic lavas. In the neighbourhood of Vesuvius and Etna several beds of lava, under each other, and each covered with vegetable soil, have been found; and the objectors to the Mosaic history, contending that each layer of soil requires at least one thousand years for its formation, calculate that the earth must have existed at least ten thousand years. Now there are two ways, as, if I mistake not, Dr. Chalmers has somewhere said, by which we may meet this objection. We may deny the truth of the geological speculation; and indeed, by counter facts,

mentioned by Sir William Hamilton himself, on whose statements the objection was at first built, we are enabled to repel it. For referring to the case of Herculaneum, destroyed by an eruption in the ninety-seventh year of the Christian era, he says, "There are evident marks that the matter of six eruptions has taken its course over it, for each of the six strata of lava is covered with a rich soil." Here then we have Sir William's own authority for six strata of *good soil*, accumulated in less than 1700 years, which leaves not three hundred to the production of each.

By turning to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, articles "Creation" and "Earth," you will find that the whole of these geological speculations are built upon facts too few and equivocal to warrant the general conclusions drawn from them. But even if we were constrained to admit the truth of these speculations, we might deny, secondly, that they run counter to the Mosaic account of the creation. There is nothing in that account to warrant the conclusion, that the earth was not brought into existence till its present form and appearance was given to it. This may have been the case, and I am disposed to think was so; but we have no certain proof of it. There is nothing in the Mosaic account to fix the creation of the substance of the heavens and the earth to the first day. Light was formed on the first day;—but that beginning when *being*, in a chaotic state, rose out of *not being*—the period when that exertion of power was put forth may, for aught we know to the contrary, have been thousands of ages, during which darkness brooded over the face of the deep, before the command issued from the mouth of the Eternal, "Let light be!"

§ 8. THIRDLY.—The season of the year in which the creation may be supposed to have taken place. Some

think the spring; because at that time the face of the earth is renewed every year, and all things begin to grow and flourish. Others, again, fix upon the autumn as the more probable time, when the fruits of the earth are fully ripe; so that our first parents had only to stretch out their hands, to obtain a supply of everything they needed. This is surely, in itself, the more probable opinion. It is also confirmed by the circumstance that the beginning of the civil year was fixed at that time,—a state of matters which continued till, by a special providence, the beginning of the year was altered, in commemoration of Israel's deliverance out of Egypt: and even after that time there was a known distinction among the Jews between the beginning of the civil and the ecclesiastical year; the former of which was the same as it had been from the beginning of the world, and answers to our month September; from whence it is more than probable that the world was created at that season of the year.

§ 9. FIFTHLY.—LET US CONTEMPLATE THE MANNER IN WHICH GOD ACCOMPLISHED THE WORK OF CREATION.

It has been already observed that creation intends the production of *being*, and of *form*. The first was effected in a moment; in the accomplishment of the latter, six days were employed, for the purposes just stated, by the great Creator. A question has been raised with respect to the progress of the works of God on each of the days; viz. whether each of the works of a day was perfected in a single moment, or occupied the whole of the day. I do not think the arguments on either side are decisive; and the question seems to me of so little moment, that I shall not consume any time in stating them. We shall, however, take a rapid glance

at the progress of the work of creation, as it is stated in the first chapter of the Book of Genesis.

Having stated generally, in the first verse, that God in the beginning imparted existence to the heavens and the earth, the historian proceeds to direct our more particular attention to that part of the great universe with which we are immediately connected, and to describe the formation of the earth and the solar system out of the chaotic materials already in being. The work of the first day was the production of light, and its separation from the darkness. The word "light" here means the element or matter of light, which appears to have been separated from the chaotic mass, and condensed into an aurora-like meteor, and made to revolve round the earth, so as to constitute day and night, till it was collected around the body of the sun. At any rate, this may have been the case; and the statement shows us how futile is the objection of infidels, that there was light, and day and night, before the existence of the sun. There is more true philosophy in the statements of Moses than in the language of these objectors. Moses seems to have known what philosophy did not till very lately discover, that the sun is not the original source of light; and therefore he calls neither the sun nor the moon a great light, though he represents them both as great luminaries, or light bearers. Had the objector looked into his Hebrew, Greek, or Latin Bible, he would have found that the word which, in the third verse, our translators have properly rendered "light," is different from that which in the fourteenth verse they have improperly rendered "light" also. In the third verse, the original word is *ôr* [אור], the Greek *φῶς*, and the Vulgate Latin *lux*; in the fourteenth verse, the corresponding words are *meoroth* [מְעֹרֹת], *phōsteres* [φωστῆρες], and

*luminaria.* Each of the former set of words means the matter to which in English we give the name of light; each of the latter, the instruments or means by which the light is transmitted to man. On the first day, God formed the element of light, and separated it from the chaotic mass: on the fourth day, he collected it round the body of the sun; or established that system by which the sun and moon are the means of transmitting it to us; previous to which he adopted other means of providing for the succession of day and night.

On the second day, the firmament was formed: or the element of air was disentangled and separated from the chaos, to divide the waters of the clouds from those upon the face of the earth; and to provide for the refreshment of the earth, by the descent of dew and rain upon it.

The first business of the third day was the separation of the remaining elements, earth and water. They were originally mixed together. To have remained so would have been, on many accounts, a state of matters exceedingly to be deprecated. The Almighty commanded, accordingly, that they should be divided; and they were divided accordingly. The earth was drained of its superfluous moisture. The water was deposited in hollows and beds, expressly formed for the purpose by the power of the Almighty; and the dry land appeared. And as the second act of this day, the earth was in an instant arrayed in a covering of grass and flowers, and plants and trees of all kinds, laden with fruits, and not subjected to the ordinary laws of maturation.

On the fourth day, the sun and moon were placed in the firmament of heaven, for the purposes mentioned by the historian. It cannot certainly be gathered from the language of the historian, whether the substance or matter of which these bodies are composed was then first



collected together, or whether they were then merely constituted *luminaria*. The learned editor of *Stackhouse*, in which upon this subject you will find much valuable information, conceives the latter to have been the case; and I am disposed to agree with him. The body, so to speak, of the sun and moon, and the substance or matter of all the planets in the solar system, were in all probability projected to the place they were to occupy, on the instant in which the Almighty began to reduce the chaotic mass to order; but the light was not collected around the body of the sun, nor were either of them constituted *luminaria* till the fourth day.

These lights were appointed to divide the day from the night. And since the light of the moon is at least 50,000 times less intense than that of the sun, there is a broad line of distinction between the day, which is splendidly enlightened by the one, and the night, the darkness of which is but partially and feebly chased away by the other.

They were, further, placed for signs, inasmuch as they afford proof of the continued care and agency of God. They indicate approaching changes of the weather. Previous to the discovery of the loadstone, they were of importance in this respect to the mariner; and on extraordinary occasions, as previous to the destruction of Jerusalem, they appear to have been premonitory to the world. They were, again, appointed for seasons, as well as for signs, *i. e.* for the production of seasons; for it is well known that the distinction of day and night, as well as the difference of the seasons, are produced by the relative position of the earth and the sun, during the diurnal and annual journeys of the former.

The following days were employed in the production of the various tribes of animated existences. It is wor-

thy of remark, how the subject rises upon us as we proceed. The first specimens of creative power and skill were inanimate beings. The next things possessing vegetable life; animals succeeded to these; and man, possessed of rational as well as of animal life, closed the catalogue of the Creator's wondrous works.

§ 10. SIXTHLY.—I WILL ADD, AS A LAST REMARK, AN OBSERVATION OR TWO ON THE OBJECT OF CREATION.

On this point, there can be no doubt that the ultimate object of Jehovah was the promotion of his own glory; or the manifestation of his character, which is his glory, so as to secure to himself a revenue of praise from his intelligent creatures.

The truth of this is unquestionable: because the whole of the material creation is said to declare the glory of the Lord, *i. e.* to exhibit his power and wisdom and goodness; while the whole of the intelligent creation are commanded to aim at his glory in all they do, and say, and enjoy. This accordingly was the great object for which they were created.

Reason teaches that such must have been the case, Whatever be the most important end which Jehovah could have proposed to himself, that, there can be no question, he did propose to himself. ~~It~~ there be an object more important than the promotion of the Divine glory, that he would propose. There could be no competition; and in the advancement or exhibition of that glory, the happiness of all his creatures must be involved.

END OF VOL. I.



